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ABSTRACT

This volume is part of a series of monographs from Australia devoted to outlining an alternative approach, based on neo-Marxist concepts, to educational administration. The introductory essay considers the way in which those making decisions about school curricula are influenced by their administrative and social context. The first part of the essay develops a sociological model of curricular decisionmaking which is then used to analyze the way in which individual teachers, schools, and policymakers make decisions about instructional content, pedagogy, and evaluation. Examples are then presented of teacher-based, school-based, and externally based curricular decisions to illustrate the systemic influences upon, and effects of, these decisions. The next section examines the position of agents of curricular respectability at the national/regional level, and also the curricular influence of universities, teachers' unions, and the economy. Four readings by separate authors follow: (1) "The Limits of Curricular Experience: An Analysis of Experience and Possibility," by Peter W. Musgrave; (2) "Secondary Education for All: The Evolution of Policy and Practice in Victorian Secondary Schools, 1968-1978," by Shiela Spear; (3) "After Bureaucracy What?: An Australian Case Study," by Alan Rice; and (4) "Dangerous Knowledge: A Case Study in the Social Control of Knowledge," by Ken Johnston. An annotated bibliography is included. (TE)

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P. W. Musgrave

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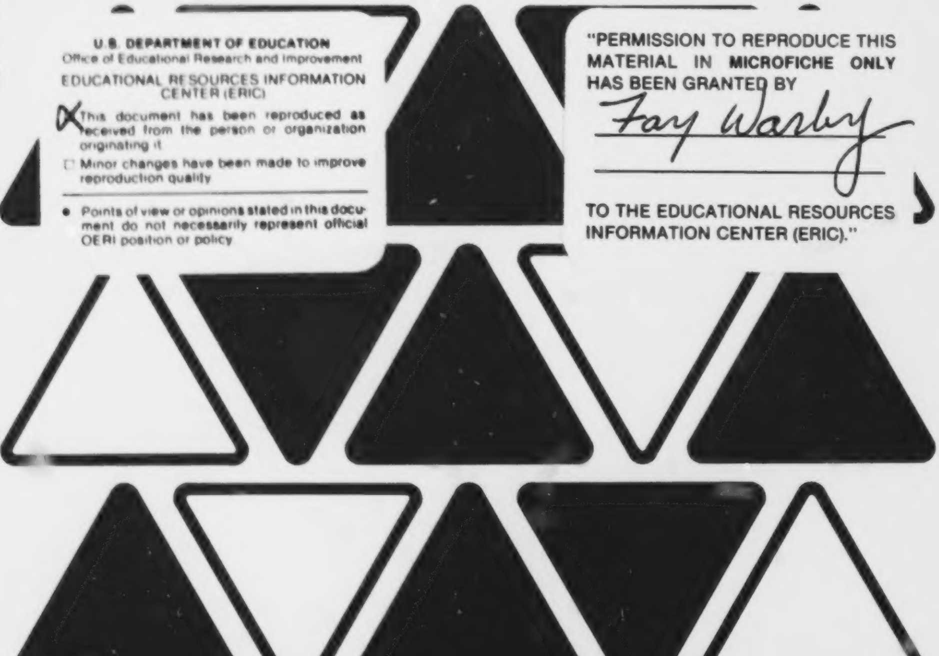

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Curricular Decisions in their Administrative Contexts

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The course includes:
Richard Bates, *Liberalism, Marxism and the Struggle for the State: Prolegomena to the Study of Public Administration*
Richard Bates, *Public Administration and the Crisis of the State*
Bill Hannan, *Assessment and Evaluation in Schooling*
P.W. Musgrave, *Curricular Decisions in their Administrative Contexts*
Peter Watkins, *Agency and Structure: Dialectics in the Administration of Education*

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Students enrolled in the course are also supplied with a guide to the course.

Series introduction

It is not possible to understand the nature of educational administration without understanding the broader context of public administration or, further, the social and political debate over the nature of the state, civil society and the economy, and their relationships. The series of volumes of which this book is a part addresses these various issues. Beginning with a discussion of the contested relationship between the individual and the state, the politics of administration is set within the debate over liberalism, Marxism and critical theory, and the nature of the crisis of the modern state. The impact of this crisis on public administration is then examined, especially in terms of the 'new' public administration and the notion of public good. An examination of educational administration follows, as do studies of the administrative context of curriculum and of evaluation. Finally, a discussion of the dialectical nature of educational administration is presented.

The introductory essay of each volume is a digest of current debate and a contribution to it. So that readers may enter that debate rapidly key readings are appended, as is an annotated bibliography of key works in the field. We hope that this presentation of the debate will encourage others to join in the exploration of such issues in educational administration.

Richard J. Bates
Course team chairperson

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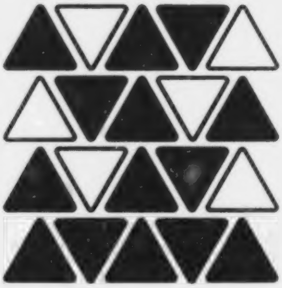
Curricular decisions in their administrative contexts



Introduction

The topic to be considered in this monograph is the way in which those making decisions about school curricula are influenced by their administrative context. In this introduction the three main concepts that are central to this topic will be discussed. These are respectively: curriculum, decision making, and administrative context.

Perspectives

The term 'curriculum' has been variously defined. In a broad treatment Bernstein (1975, pp. 85–115) sees 'curriculum' as covering three elements. There is, first, the content of what is taught; this element, almost synonymous with a set of the relevant subject syllabuses, is one common meaning given to the term. Second, there is the pedagogy used; that is, the way in which teacher and learner must relate so that the intended content is taught and learnt. Lastly, there is the evaluation undertaken to discover the outcomes of this teaching and learning. Some writers differentiate between the 'manifest' and the 'hidden' curriculum. The latter term sometimes refers to the lessons that teachers plan to teach, but which in the event they teach in some Machiavellian way so that the learners themselves do not recognise what is happening. Sometimes, however, the term refers to the unintended consequences of teaching a curriculum; this meaning may better be termed 'the unanticipated curriculum'.

In this monograph 'curriculum' will be taken to cover Bernstein's content and pedagogy inasmuch as they are made manifest in documents about what schools plan that their students learn. Not all of these lessons may take place on campus; it may be planned that some occur away from the school, for example, at home or on a school expedition. This interpretation of curriculum is near to the contemporary common-sense meaning given to the term in education circles, matches much recent writing and is difficult enough to analyse without trying to cope with 'the unanticipated curriculum'.

The making of decisions has rarely been analysed in sociological terms. The concept can cover either such large-scale changes to a school's curriculum as the adoption by a formerly traditional school of an integrated humanities program taught in an open-plan setting, or smaller variations as, for example, when a new textbook, rather similar to the one used at present but containing more up-to-date material, is put into use by one teacher. Many curricular decisions affect the school timetable, which is one of the easiest departure points for any outsider to begin to uncover any school's curriculum, and the goals and assumptions upon which it has been constructed. Mathematics and science are taught, but art and music are not. English has fewer periods per week than mathematics, and modern language is taught in only Years 9 to 12. Just as there has been little research on how curricular decisions have been made, there has been even less research on the timetable. Indeed, one recent study in 50 English comprehensive schools concludes:

> The whole process was never, in fact, explicitly worked out in advance, and consequently many crucial decisions affecting the lives and careers of individual children were wrongly made either by accident or by default.
> (Bates 1973, p. 450)

In this present analysis a framework, based on the work of the phenomenological sociologist Alfred Schutz, and previously developed to analyse moral decisions (Musgrave 1978, ch. 3), will be used to organise the various relevant research reports and discursive accounts cited here. This conceptual framework will be presented in the next section.

In his paper on the timetable Bates (1973) sets his analysis in a complex view of the *administrative context* involved in planning the curriculum. Parents, students, staff—old and new—and specialists in teaching methods, as well as such impersonal factors as external course requirements, have all to be taken into account. Each teacher will justify his or her wishes or demands from a value-laden position which may be consciously expressed or may rest on unexamined assumptions. Each teacher or group of teachers in a school will have varying power to implement decisions. In this situation of potential conflict some sort of administrative mechanism will be created, particularly in the contemporary situation where schools and school systems are large and complex, in order to adjudicate between conflicting views and to enable curricular decisions to be taken. Because educational aims tend to be hard to define exactly, the matching of curricular means to educational ends is an inexact process, allowing for very various decisions to emerge within any machinery set up at national, regional, or school levels. Since values, often associated with political positions, are involved, decisions about curriculum can be hard fought. For example, traditional academic curricula are seen by some as elitist, whilst some progressive curricular are thought to be egalitarian. Both adjectives raise a host of emotive political issues.

Until certainly 1939, the existing administrative context for curricular decisions was judged to be fully capable of dealing with the few changes needed in a relatively slow-moving world. Today change and crisis seem the norm, and many commentators are scathing about the old policy of what has been called 'disjointed incrementalism', or in plain English 'muddling through'. They have begun to recommend a more rational and planned strategy for curricular decisions that will attempt to examine the overall academic, economic and political position when, for example, demands are made in the curriculum for the inclusion of such new 'subjects' as computer education, health and human relationships, environmental science, driver education, and peace education. Instead of piecemeal alternatives, a wide-ranging policy, based on the available data, is thought to be a necessity (Braybrook and Lindbloom 1963, pp. 582–3). In these circumstances the administrative context is taken here to refer to the constantly changing array of, usually bureaucratic, mechanisms that are established at the various levels of the educational and political systems and that aim to adjudicate between the value-saturated demands for curricular decisions.

In the next section we shall consider one possible sociological way of constructing the social reality that we call 'making decisions about the curriculum'. This framework will then be used to analyse, firstly, the way in which individual teachers make such decisions; secondly, what has come to be called school-based curriculum development (SBCD); and, finally, what will be termed 'agents of curricular respectability', that is, those persons with the power to enforce the teaching of a certain version and/or selection of the knowledge that is available in the society concerned.

The making of decisions

In an analysis of the place of experts in controlling the curriculum Carson has written:

> Curriculum decisions are (rational) decisions and as such are action prescriptions. They involve making rational choices between or among alternatives based on some justifying principle . . . giving consideration to the usual consequences and those anticipated in the case at hand.
>
> (Carson 1979b, p.135)

The position to be taken here is that such a view of decision making in relation to curriculum or, indeed, to all common-sense topics is based on too simple and too rational an approach. Furthermore, we must always remember what has already been hinted in passing: that a decision that appears as one unitary decision may be only the final part of a long process made up of many small decisions, each of which narrowed the range within which it became possible to make future decisions.

For the purposes of this analysis we can specify two extreme cases of making decisions. The first covers the routine decisions made in accordance with some common-sense recipe or recipes for matching ends to means that have proved adequate in the past and in the matter for present decision seem perfectly adequate. Opposed to such routine decisions are those that require very conscious reflection because the nature of the problem on hand is such that existing agreed procedures are inadequate. In real life many decisions fall between these two extreme analytical types.

Schutz has described the general process of making choices between alternatives in this way: 'Each of the alternatives standing to choice has . . . to be rehearsed in phantasy in order to make choice and decisions possible' (1962, Vol. I, p. 30). Where this process is more ruled by what Finch calls 'rules of thumb' (1981, p. 322) the decision will be termed a *routine* decision and where the 'rehearsal' is more conscious the term *reflective* decision will be used.

Routine decisions

In their day-to-day lives in their classrooms and under normal administrative circumstances teachers meet most of their curricular problems by making routine decisions. They will behave rather like Schutz's 'well-informed citizen' who neither labours under the narrowing disability of being 'possessed of expert knowledge' nor 'acquiesce[s] in the fundamental vagueness of a mere recipe knowledge or in the irrationalilty of his unclarified passions and sentiments' (1962, Vol. II, p. 122). In such routine work means-ends relationships are mechanised by referring standardised means to standardised classes of ends. Intermediate steps disappear and speedy decisions are possible. Teachers routinely imagine the act accomplished so that they can 'judge whether the contemplated means of bringing it about are appropriate or not'. Schutz calls this technique of deliberation 'thinking in the future perfect tense' (1962, Vol. II, p. 77).

These routine decisions deal quickly with the vast majority of the curricular problems that teachers meet in the normal life of classrooms, that principals have to deal with in relation to their schools, and that administrators outside the school usually face.

Those involved at each level have learnt what have been called 'vocabularies of motives' (Gerth and Mills 1954, pp. 112–29) which are brought into play as they consider how to decide between the alternatives open to them. Phrases like 'the HSC syllabus', 'departmental recommendations' or 'guidelines' motivate many teachers to think along predetermined lines and with predetermined attitudes so, that the alternatives to a given curricular decision are considerably narrowed or even reduced to one possibility. Part of the explanation that Rice (1983) adduces rests on such modes of routine thinking. Much of the control of the centre over the periphery in contemporary educational systems relies upon those at the centre knowing that the teachers in the schools will not use their apparent curricular discretion in any way other than that implied by present versions of routine. Indeed, administrators at the centre may encourage this tendency by witholding resources or not running in-service courses, so that the existing routine is never questioned. The teachers in a school where curriculum days permitted by regulation are never held will have less competence to question routine decisions than those in a school where discussion on curricular matters is regularly encouraged.

Reflective decisions

From time to time there are crises which bring into question present curricular procedures and the motives upon which teachers are acting. These may be caused by, for example, major changes in the ethnic composition of the student body, a raising of the minimum legal school-leaving age, the increasing salience of some industrial technique, or some social problem. The coming of the computer and the prevalence of drugs may be cited as examples of the last two cases. Teachers then become concerned with situations where they have to face new and possibly a greater number of competing alternatives. A choice is needed. A conscious attempt must be made to reflect rationally on the factors involved at all the stages throughout the whole process whereby means are related to ends so that a justifiable decision can be made.

For analytical purposes the making of such a decision can be seen to consist of four elements: the structure of knowledge to hand on the present curricular problem; the factors considered relevant by the teacher or administrator concerned; the actual and possible interpretations of others of the teacher's choices; and, finally, the 'weighting' (Schutz, 1962, Vol.I, pp. 93–4) of these three elements.

1 Knowledge at hand

If a curricular decision is to be well based, then the person making it must have as full a knowledge as is possible of at least the following: the subject concerned, the materials and teaching methods related to it, those who know about such matters from whom he can seek advice, and the educational and also the political views held about the available choices. No teacher and very few administrators come near to knowing all that there is to know about any problem to hand, but they can make a conscious effort to seek out more knowledge than they had when the crisis that drove them from a routine to a reflective decision first occurred.

2 Factors

Schutz wrote: 'We have to learn what is interpretively relevant'. He also differentiated between 'imposed' and 'intrinsic' relevancies. Intrinsic relevancies relate to those implicit in the teacher's present 'paramount theme' (1970, pp. 28–43), so that relevancies will arise from his own goals and knowledge. 'Imposed' relevancies, however, are forced on teachers usually because they feel they must consider them in view of possible sanctions, whether seen as rewards or punishments, that may be brought to bear upon them, as they go through the often long process of making their decisions.

Examples of each category can be given. In a Scottish comprehensive school an integrated science course was introduced but the plans were made using the knowledge implicit in the former traditional course, so that the existing timetable was not changed to allow for the double periods now needed nor was account taken of the fact that classes had to move between geographically separate buildings (Hamilton 1975). Imposed relevancies usually result from decisions made by someone other than the person on whom the analysis is focussed. Thus, a teacher who is requested by the principal, and a principal who is directed by the state education department, and a central administrator who is ordered by a politician to make a curricular decision will have relevancies imposed upon them which must be taken into account in making the detailed decisions about how to implement some new curriculum.

3 Interpretations of others

Whenever decisions are made an important factor must always be how those making the decision think the others involved in the process will react to the various choices at hand. In essence, decisions in this respect resemble those taken in political matters. In this respect, 'political' refers not merely to large affairs of state, but to all negotiations that allocate resources between contestants. Politics is about power at every level from the classroom or staffroom, where some decisions about what will be taught and the timetable are made, to the regional office or Cabinet room, where the decisions about the division of resources among schools and among school systems are usually taken. In all these cases the views of how others with more or less power will react are considered. Such judgements depend often on memories of behaviour in similar situations in the past, but sometimes they have to be made solely on anticipated reactions in entirely new situations.

4 Weighting

Given that teachers know as much as possible of the content, methods, setting and relevant research about any proposed curricular plan; given also, that they have considered both the imposed and intrinsic relevancies, and that they have put themselves in the shoes of all those likely to be affected, they still have to decide to which of all the usually incomplete and often largely judgemental evidence they should give most weight. An equation somewhat on the following lines will have to be worked at in their minds: 'I'm unsure if the kids really will learn from this new method. Their parents won't understand what I'm up to and anyway the boss is likely to go mad when he hears. So what will I do? Nothing or risk it? Clearly their decisions depend on how great a weight they give to each consideration—and in deciding on what to do they must in effect add oranges, grapes and apples, which, we are told, is logically impossible.

What makes the solving of such curricular problems more difficult is that most decisions fall between the two extreme types here used for analysis. They are not fully routine, nor fully reflective. Much curricular behaviour depends upon the unthinking and routine application of recipes that are rarely formulated in exact terms. The problem is grasped and almost immediately a decision is made. Such solutions may become habitual responses. Every so often, however, an unpredicted crisis occurs and forces reflection which may lead to either a new application of the principles involved in the present curricular routines or a totally new redefinition of the curricular situation. Such reflective decisions mark major changes and it is to how individual teachers may become involved in and react to such situations that we now turn.

The curricular decisions of individual teachers

There are two popular stereotypes of the position of a teacher in making curricular decisions. In the first the teacher is seen as passive with little or no power to decide much in the classroom. On this view the most power that the teacher is considered to have is that of refusing suggestions that are made to him or her. In the second stereotype the teacher is portrayed as having an important part to play in deciding not so much what will be taught but more how the curriculum will be implemented. On this view the teacher has, at the very least, important discretionary power.

To some extent these two stereotypes can be tied to views about how the educational system should be controlled. The first stereotype of powerlessness is linked to support for tight control of the school. This was the traditional way of exercising curricular control. The curriculum is laid down in detail by the central authority and compliance by teachers is closely monitored. Teachers have little scope for decisions, but on the other hand a very complex bureaucratic system is needed to ensure that curricular deviance does not occur and often, as the complexity of control increases, compliance rises only at a diminishing rate. The second view of the teacher as having some degree of discretion is of more recent development and in this case control clearly requires much less complex administrative monitoring. There is a trade-off for those in power 'between more complexity with greater hierarchical control and less complexity with greater delegated control' (Elmore 1983, p. 343).

In both these cases teachers do have to make some decisions, in the case of the powerless teacher usually of the routine type and in the case where the teacher has discretion more often of the reflective type. In this section the evidence that is available will be used to discover how *individual* teachers make these curricular decisions. The framework suggested earlier will be used to organise the material. In turn, the knowledge at hand, the relevant factors, the interpretation of others and the weighting will be considered.

Knowledge at hand

Beeby (1966) has shown how educational systems can be seen to develop through four stages: the Dame School stage, the stage of formalism, a transitional stage to, finally, the stage of meaning. The stages, described in Musgrave (1980, p. 82), are marked by an increasingly educated and trained force of teachers. Historically, it would appear that as teachers became more knowledgeable about subject content and better trained in pedagogical terms they became not only more competent to teach, but also more desirous of making the decisions about what and how they should teach. In the circumstances teachers could be less completely controlled and could be given more discretion in regard to the curriculum.

The initial training of teachers has tended to vary depending upon whether they planned to teach in primary or secondary schools, being broader in the former and more specialised, particularly in regard to academic content, in the latter. This in turn has implied that the decisions to be made in primary schools are broader and less academic than in secondary schools. The stock of knowledge brought from initial training will be built on throughout a teacher's career as a result of experience and through such mechanisms as in-service courses. This latter method of increasing the knowledge at hand for individual teachers has been found by Berman and McLaughlin (1975, pp. 359–61) in their massive survey of curricular innovation in the USA to be particularly helpful in making decisions about the courses that are either focussed on local conditions or based on the problems of the school concerned.

This is an important point because the flow of information to serving teachers has repeatedly in many societies been found to be attentuated in the extreme. One difficulty is that much of the relevant information, especially in the form of research findings, is not made available to them in a suitable way. It is usually disseminated in expensive and scarce journals or texts often written in what teachers take to be jargon. Recently, the Australian and the New Zealand Educational Research Councils have started to publish *SET*, a journal which aims to overcome this problem by making available, in a readily understandable form, recent Australian and New Zealand research. But even this attempt has so far been less than successful. Owen (1983) found that in a sample of 96 schools which subscribed to *SET* '70 per cent of teachers reported that they were unaware of the publication' (p. 55). Work in the USA has shown the importance of personal contact in disseminating new information to teachers. Owen's work on the impact of the Australian Science Education Project (ASEP) shows that the same principle applies in Australia. Thus, an important factor influencing the availability to teachers of ASEP materials was some contact with science consultants during the early stages of implementation. In South Australia and Tasmania, where consultants were readily available, information about ASEP flowed more easily to science teachers than in the other states.

A final index of the flow of new knowledge to teachers may be found in a study made by Owen in 1981, in which Victorian teachers were asked about their contacts with recent developments in educational research and evaluation. 'Very few read journals devoted to educational research; 18 per cent said they regularly read the State Curriculum and Research Bulletin and only two per cent read the Australian Journal of Education'. Less formal journals and in-service activities were 'strongly supported' (Owen 1983, p. 55), and this must include the journals of professional associations. Once again the importance of local and personal contacts is observed.

A teacher's initial training gives him or her a perspective on his or her subject. This is especially true of secondary teachers who specialise in what they teach, but is to some extent also now true of primary teachers, as they, too, study an academic major. A 'subject' can be seen in sociological terms to consist of a number of separate and segmented groups of academics, each with their own interests and views of the content involved and how it should be presented. There are varying degrees of conflict and co-operation between the segments in any subject, and the outcome of the process of any negotiations concerning the definition of the subject is always a temporary truce. This definition in turn influences the nature of the material available to teachers (Cooper 1983, pp. 219–20). Thus, teachers of English trained in the older Leavisite tradition will want to use different materials from those brought up in the modern structuralist way. Mathematicians trained by supporters of a structured approach will not plan the same type of curriculum as those whose teachers focussed on technical competence. In addition, teachers are influenced by the fads and fashions of educational theorists. For example, in the 1960s economists made much of human capital theory whereby quantifying the effects of educational investment in human beings was thought to be possible. The radical 1970s viewed such a conceptual approach as almost indecent. However, the monetarist 1980s have seen some regained support for this conceptual approach. Similarly, there was a waxing and waning of the support for integrated humanities teaching in the 1970s, as Spear (1983) demonstrates was true of the situation in Victoria.

At a deeper level the content of initial training in an academic subject seems to influence teachers' epistemologies, that is, the very way in which they conceive of knowledge. Young (1981), working in Victoria and New South Wales, found that most secondary teachers appear to relate their thinking about teaching broadly to one of two epistemologies which he names 'technicist' and 'interpretive'. The former is based on the application in the classroom of a positivistic view of science to knowledge and to pedagogy, and its proponents tend to adopt a more 'visible' curricular approach; that is, they exert an explicit control over their students. The latter rests on subjective, personal and intuitive ways of knowing and teaching; teachers who conceive of knowledge in this way more often rely on 'invisible' ways of teaching, whereby more covert means of controlling children are used (Bernstein 1975, pp.116–51). Young's work indicates, therefore, how a teacher's initial academic training will tend to influence the curricular framework he or she adopts. Young also showed that a teacher's epistemology could influence both how he or she assessed pupils and how he or she tried to control them in the classroom. On this argument the type of knowledge used by teachers as they consider making decisions will be selected differentially, in large part according to their initial training.

Teachers may reach the same curricular decision as a result of quite different experience and with different stocks of knowledge. It is, therefore, inevitable that they will perceive the opportunities for their making different types of decisions in very different ways. In this context Smith (1983) has used the concept of 'perceived curriculum decision-making space' in the research he has undertaken using the case study method with seven primary and four secondary teachers in New South Wales. Part of his research supports the interpretation given here to Young's work. Smith considers various levels of curricular decisions and at the 'system level', under which he subsumes decisions about content to be taught in the classroom, he concludes that curricular decisions 'are closely related to each study teachers' view of the nature and internal characteristics of the subject they are teaching' (p. 27). Using Bernstein's (1975, pp.85–115) concept of classification—which relates to the strength of the boundries of an academic subject—Smith found that for subjects that were seen to be highly classified 'the respective teachers ... perceive highly restricted options regarding decision alternatives, and limited operational space in which to make those curriculum decisions' (p. 27). On the other hand, for teachers who saw their subject as weakly classified the 'operational space...[for]... curriculum decisions is very large' (Smith 1983, p. 27).

One other study is relevant here. So far we have examined how a teacher's stock of knowledge influences his or her curricular decisions but we have taken his or her objectives for granted. Recently Toomey (1978) has shown that objectives themselves are influenced by pedagogical approaches. In an ethnographic study of four Year 11 social study teachers he examined how teachers planned their courses and concluded by suggesting that 'the perception the teacher has of the teacher–student relationship, of the appropriateness of the content-materials and of the nature of the instructional process may well help to shape his decision about how to frame his objectives' (1978, p. 126). In other words, the influences of goals, knowledge and pedagogy are interactive.

Factors

A number of factors can be shown to influence how individual teachers decide to put their stocks of knowledge to use in the classroom. The first is the nature of the educational system in which teachers finds themselves. At present in many countries attempts are being made by the central authority once again to tighten up the control of the system, particularly at the school level. An example of this is the imposition in many states in the USA of minimum competency legislation, whereby legal requirements are made about what students leaving school should know and be able to do. In Australia the main index of this same tendency is the reintroduction in several states of some elements of a core curriculum; more detailed reference to this tendency will be made later.

There are at least two possibly valid reasons for the participation of central authorities in the making of curricula. First, the pressures from outside the school on teachers are great and, hence, those at the centre have a good case for forcing teachers to make overt the principles upon which they work. Secondly, because children by law have to undergo some ten years of compulsory education they and their parents do have some rights that should be defended by the central authority. However, teachers greatly dislike such central controls on two main grounds. Many feel that the government may, through its education department, use the schools for its own political ends, as, it is felt, did the Nazis and do the countries in the Eastern bloc, who, in turn, think that so-called Western societies are just as blameworthy in this respect. In addition, teachers see themselves in many respects as professionals who are able to and should make decisions about their own conditions and methods of work. Above all, the curriculum and pedagogy are seen to be professional matters not to be tampered with by any politician or bureaucrat working on their behalf. Such persons are amateurs in a field that must be left to the experts, namely the teachers.

Yet the surprising situation seems to be that teachers are somewhat apathetic about using the professional freedom that they, or their associations, so vigorously claim. The Australian evidence cited above concerning lack of interest in keeping their stock of knowledge up to date is again relevant at this point. A striking demonstration of the power of the central pressure felt by individual teachers when making detailed decisions in the classroom is contained in some research by Floden et al. (1981) in the USA. In this questionnaire study, elementary teachers who taught Grade 4 mathematics had to consider adding or dropping topics from the curriculum under a number of different external pressures. 'Perhaps the most striking result . . . [was] . . . the degree to which teachers see themselves going along with whatever pressures are administered'. The researchers suggest 'either that teachers are actually so malleable or that teachers think malleability is the socially acceptable image' (Floden et al. 1981, p. 139).

At a level nearer to the classroom, the way in which a school is organised is also a factor that influences how teachers make curricular decisions. One recent study of urban schools in New Zealand identified a number of characteristics differentiating 'successful' and 'unsuccessful' schools on the criterion of their treatment of alienated or potentially alienated students. One important characteristic was the atmosphere within which decisions were made. Where the principal acted in a 'firm yet ostensibly democratic' way schools were more successful. In this case principals led, but depended upon advice from teachers and might change their decision as a result of such advice. Where this was not the case staff split into *ad hoc* groups, some of which gave their members material support while others ran programs or provided members with counselling (Ramsay et al. 1983, pp.285-8).

Teachers in the New Zealand schools where the principals exercised clear leadership must have received some reward, mental or material; for example, their advice was listened to by their principals. Where the eventual decision to be made is highly innovative and has to overcome an established structure the entrepreneurial teacher, as well as needing talent, persistence and resources, will often require a reward that he sees as worthwhile. One particular reward often considered is the chance to be promoted, for example, to the headship of a department or to the post of curriculum consultant. As House (1974, pp. 96-7) has pointed out, the ironical aspect is that where such rewards are influential there is a built-in limit to innovative decisions, because the supply of appointments, either in schools or in school systems, to be used as rewards is severely restricted.

Different atmospheres influencing curricular decisions can also exist at departmental level, as Turner (1969) has shown in an English study of the way in which a medium-sized secondary modern school was developed into a large comprehensive school. In this school departments came to be organised in three ways: some, for example mathematics, were 'closely supervised through all [their] workings by [the] head'; others, for example, history, 'ran informally, with three teachers, all qualified historians, exchanging views and agreeing upon a common approach, but freely interpreting details of syllabus and teaching method in their own way'; and lastly, one, English, had 'no apparent organisation'—the result was near chaos (Turner 1969, p. 72).

The present curriculum is a strong influence against decisions for change. It is supported in a number of powerful ways that press on the detailed decisions of classroom teachers. The existing textbooks, for example, are difficult to circumvent. In the study by Floden et al. the researchers noted 'how reluctant teachers seem to be regarding the omission of topics' (1981 p. 139), particularly in regard to existing textbooks. Nor were the responding teachers very keen to add new material to that of the textbook in use (Floden et al. 1981, pp. 139-40).

The same point can be made by citing Australian evidence concerning the poor take-up of the ASEP and Social Education Materials Project (SEMP) materials. Each of these sets of materials was written for secondary teachers and in them the attempt was made both to widen the boundaries of subject areas and to allow teachers to sequence and select materials for themselves (Northfield 1983). In other words, these materials challenged the limits of teachers' stocks of knowledge and also relied upon teachers to develop an understanding of their own school context and of the ways in which these new materials might be used in their differing situations. However, the minimum support, whether by in-service courses or from their principals or others within the school, was neither forthcoming automatically nor consciously planned, so that the expected take-up was not realised. A partial exception was in South Australia where the department had issued a book, *Do it Yourself Curriculum Guide* (1974), which enabled teachers the more easily to apply new materials. A major difference was found in states where education departments made ASEP materials available free, since they did not compete with any textbook provided by the department (Owen 1983). In these cases an innovatory decision was rewarded by the supply of free resources.

A further structural factor concerns the way in which chronological age is dealt with in educational systems. The minimum legal leaving age defines the period within which whatever is socially or professionally perceived to be a necessary minimal curriculum must be taught. More importantly perhaps today, any changes in that age, particularly raising it, will strongly influence curriculum decisions, if only because a new category of students, the age group which previously did not partake of higher secondary education because many of them were alienated from school, will suddenly be forced by law to become secondary students. In addition, the ages at which students move between sections of the school system, for example, from primary to secondary or from junior secondary to sixth-form college, will govern the pedagogical approach taken as well as the curricular content with various age groups. Again, the number of and the chronological age normal for external examinations will have a somewhat similar effect on curricular decisions. The trend towards fewer external examinations, particularly since the Second World War, has reduced external influences on curricula at both the primary and the lower secondary levels. A dramatic example was the elimination of external examinations at the end of Years 10 and 11 in Victoria in the years around 1970, which had the effect of at least increasing the possibility for teachers to decide on their own content (see Rice 1983) in the early years of secondary schooling (Toomey 1984).

Interpretations of others

Curricular decisions have implications for others and teachers must consider how those to whom the decisions are relevant will perceive them. There will be implications, firstly, for those to whom the teacher is responsible and these will often be of a political nature, involving politicians and the public servants who put their policies into effect. But curricular choices obviously also affect those for whom teachers are responsible, the students upon whom they impose their decisions. Such decisions are political in a second sense, in that power is used arbitrarily at an interpersonal level. Teachers must make some interpretation of the implications of any decision at both levels, so that they can judge, for example, whether or not the decision will be accepted by those that they perceive to be involved. Three examples will be cited of how such interpretations govern curricular decisions.

The first is considered in great detail in Johnson (1978). In brief, a parent made a complaint to the acting principal of a large New South Wales secondary school about the way in which a teacher was teaching about sex. In her view he had taught 'an unsuitable lesson'. In his curricular planning the teacher had not perceived that any parent would view his material to be 'dangerous knowledge' and bring the whole political force of the state education department against him and his chosen curriculum content.

The second example is drawn from Rice (1983), in which Graham, a socialist, avoids teaching about the 'critique of capitalism', because he 'know[s] what'll happen [if he does]' (p. 48). Graham's interpretation of possible consequences prevented him taking the curricular decision that he wished.

The final example concerns a study in the USA that looked at the way in which teachers react to the large variations in the content taught in elementary mathematics and also tried to locate who selected the content that is ultimately taught. Case studies of seven Grade 3 to 5 teachers in six schools in three school districts were made to discover what content they taught and why this and not some other material was chosen. Although external policies did influence these teachers, the researchers concluded that they also reacted selectively to the external pressures that were brought against them. The policies pursued by individual teachers depended, as we would now expect, upon their own 'repertoires', i.e. stocks of knowledge at hand, and also upon their perceptions of what their students were able to do. External policies were in some cases mandated; for example, so many periods weekly of a given length had to be taught. But, in addition, the teachers were influenced by their interpretations of those who put pressures upon them. They would consult their own perceptions of how closely administrators would police a mandate, or monitor the use of a specific recommended text or a certain method of classroom organisation or of teaching. In the words of the researchers:

> External policies do influence teachers' content decisions . . . Nevertheless, the seven teachers also exercised much discretion. These teachers were indeed political brokers, arbitrating between their own priorities and the implied priorities of external policies.
>
> (Schwille et al. 1983 p. 387)

What is noteworthy is that this conclusion about widely differing perceptions relates to mathematics, usually seen as a strongly classified subject in which little discretion is possible.

Weighting

As is true for most of us, teachers never have all the knowledge needed to make the decisions, curricular or other, that they have to make. Different factors press on them through their interactions with others in the networks spreading out from their classrooms and are perceived to have greater or lesser importance by them. But how do they 'weight' these three elements in their making of decisions? How, for example, does a primary teacher decide what is the best way to teach children their tables, or indeed whether to do so, when those children's parents think that they know what is best for their children and they base their judgements on how they were taught a quarter of a century ago?

Some work in the USA hints at the differing importance given by principals and teachers to the various elements involved when they decide to change curricula. Fullan (1982, pp. 51–2), in his massive consideration of the, especially North American, literature on curricular change, cites a study of 679 principals of secondary schools which showed that 'the publicity value' of innovations and 'faddism' were major reasons for change, and that financial cost was not a barrier to change. In that study the possible perceptions of administrators and the general public were weighted heavily and the availability of resources lightly. Another study quoted by Fullan was an analysis of twelve case studies in which about three-fifths of the teachers involved saw 'administrative pressure' as 'the primary initiator'; almost the same proportion of teachers also saw career incentives as a major factor in their decision to make a curricular innovation. The giving of such a heavy weighting to 'careerism' was perhaps more likely in the 1960s and early-1970s when educational systems were still expanding, but similarly the ready perception of administrative pressure as a reason to take the decision to change curricula is more likely when, as now, jobs are short, since some teachers will be loath to incur the sanction of an administrator's wrath—temporary teachers feel very insecure in such a situation.

Doyle and Ponder (1978–79, pp. 6–8) have used the phrase, 'the practicality ethic' in considering the making of decisions by teachers. They name three dimensions in this ethic. The first, 'instrumentality', specifies that 'a change proposed must describe a procedure in terms which depict classroom contingencies'. Does the change meet a need of the teacher and the students involved? The second, 'congruence', concerns whether the 'proposed procedure is congruent with perceptions of [teachers'] own situations'. How does the suggested change relate to what teachers perceive that they must do? The third, 'cost', measures 'a ratio between amount of return and amount of investment'. How will any possible reward offset the efforts that seem to be involved in making the change? These three questions are used, often by routine rather than from reflection, by individual teachers as they weight their perceptions of the factors, political and other, that press on them and as they decide how to use the knowledge that they have at hand in making curricular decisions. In general, teachers gain the worst of all three dimensions since usually their knowledge is scanty so that the benefits from change are low; there is not much clarity as to how to proceed; and, lastly, personal benefit for any change is very unsure. What, then, we must next consider is whether decisions made more consciously at the school, rather than the individual, level improve the situation of the teachers involved. This is of particular importance now, because of the recent tendency, not yet completely offset by the present conservative backlash with its appeals for a compulsory core curriculum, to support what is usually called school-based curriculum development.

School-based curricular decisions

Definition

Teachers have always had to make some decisions about the minor details of curricular planning, but, as Musgrave (1980) has shown, there has been a gradual shift in England over the last century of the locus of decision making from the centre to the periphery. This same process has also been at work in Australia, particularly since the late 1960s. The end product of this tendency has been named 'school-based curriculum development' and awarded the true accolade of acceptance in the contemporary educational scene by being granted an acronym—SBCD.

Some idea of how far the SBCD movement has progressed in one state, Victoria, is worth quoting at the start of this section. The syllabus of HSC subject examinations has until very recently been seen as the more or less undisputed territory of the universities. Now, three years after the possibility of creating their own syllabuses was allowed to schools, 42 per cent of secondary schools offer courses planned by themselves; furthermore, the strongest move has come in the private sector, where 60 per cent of Catholic and 46 per cent of other non-government secondary schools have taken this opportunity (Toomey 1984, p. 13).

Yet this apparently simple concept, SBCD, hides within it great complexity. Its essence is no doubt simple: decisions on curriculum shall be taken where they are to be implemented and where those concerned can judge what will be the best materials and methods to use with the students in the circumstances ruling. However, the exact nature of the decisions that are made varies along at least three dimensions (Walton and Morgan 1981, p. 16).

The first dimension relates to the degree of involvement. This may be total or partial depending upon how much of the curriculum is covered. The teachers in a school may be empowered to make decisions about everything that is taught or only about some subjects. Thus, in England, the one legal restriction upon curriculum is that the religious education undertaken in a government school must accord to a locally approved syllabus.

The second dimension concerns the area covered by the school's decisions. These may govern only a sub-section of the school, for example, the art and craft department, or the whole of the school, or even the way in which the school extends into the community around it. Thus, decisions about excursions, camps and sports may involve parents or other members of the local community and, in addition, may utilise resources outside the school grounds.

The final dimension covers the approach that the staff of a school uses in curricular development. Teachers may select materials or textbooks developed by publishers, professional associations or others outside the school; they may, however, adapt such externally created materials to their own needs, even choosing parts from several different sets of commercially produced curricular materials; they may, finally, create totally new materials.

Many imagine that SBCD means this final case of total creation of a wholely new curriculum, covering at least every department within the school and extending the school's network out into the community, whereas such a position is one that lies at the innovatory extreme along all three dimensions. A less complete position, whereby one department was perhaps in this extreme position and others selected from commercially provided materials, could still be seen as exemplifying SBCD. In brief, the degree of commitment to each dimension is important and some attention must be given to isolating what it is that allows teachers to locate themselves at different positions along each of the three dimensions.

The shift to SBCD

During the period from the mid-1960s throughout much of the Western world there was a profound ideological shift exemplified best in 'the student troubles' in tertiary institutions. At the root of this change was a questioning of the place of all authority in social life. This had a major impact upon the way in which people viewed formal organisations, since these are by their very nature hierarchical. Prior to these years the argument had been readily accepted that large bureaucracies yielded economies of scale and efficiency that overrode many claims of the individuals, particularly those at the lower levels, who collectively comprised the organisations. Increasingly the place of the individual came to be reinforced against those with authority in such organisations. To use a term fashionable at the time, all should be allowed to 'participate' in decisions that affected them.

This tendency was reinforced in school systems by the already strongly pressed argument that teachers were professionals and should be given as much power to make decisions about their working conditions as, for example, the traditional professionals, doctors and lawyers, had been able to take for themselves. Certainly, teachers in such societies as Britain, the USA and Australia were now very much more educated and better trained than even in the inter-war years and were, therefore, more capable of taking decisions about, for example, what they taught. For various reasons, including both overseas precedents and the growing power of their unions at a time of severe shortage, teachers in Australia were able to increase their power to take curricular decisions at the school level. Indeed, one Australian academic has seen this shift to SBCD as a prime exemplar of the process whereby the legitimisation of state educational systems has been undermined. In his view the criteria for allocating tasks to various categories of teacher, for evaluating performances, and for resolving differences between schools, among schools and the community and among sub-systems within schools have all become ill-defined with the result that teachers are uncertain of their roles, of the boundaries within which they work and of where authority lies in any organisation (Pusey 1980).

Not only did state education departments withdraw detailed syllabuses at this tine, but in several states attempts were made to allow lay members of the school community more influence in curricular decisions. This was particularly true in the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria and South

Australia, where school councils with lay members came to be seen as important parts of the mechanism whereby SBCD occurred. This had been the case in the USA and Canada for some time and in general seemed to lead to little more than 'token participation' (Fullan 1982, p. 202). If such administrative mechanisms are to be created we have to make clear the conditions that are needed to ensure their success. Clearly, lay persons participating in SBCD, even where materials are being selected rather than created anew, need expertise, commitment to their view if it differs from that of the teachers, and persistence. In this context the Education Department of Victoria has supported in-service work for school council members and is at present producing a pamphlet which will assist lay persons to fulfil their responsibilities in such professional decisions.

It is difficult to judge how these new mechanisms are working because there is not much available evidence. One Victorian study did show that at the secondary level, and prior to lay participation in SBCD becoming possible, parents and others felt incapable of taking part in so-called professional decisions (Fitzgerald et al. 1976). A more recent case study refers to the operation of a curriculum committee in a South Australian country community primary school. Several problems arose for its lay members during the initial period of its work. Firstly, there was the difficulty of finding a definite task, that, once defined, allowed members of the committee to know what was expected of them. Allied to this problem was that whatever task was allocated to the committee had to be perceived by the lay members to be within their competence; details about homework, or about children on school buses or their work at home on farms were all seen as possibilities. Secondly, members of the committee felt that teachers sometimes brought to them for rubber stamping *faits accomplis* concerning matters that were really outside their competence; in these cases they felt used by the school. Thirdly, the expected problem arose about how to deal with the sensitivity of teachers in the fields of curriculum and of teaching methods, but a fourth professional area, the appointment of teachers, was also an issue; how big a part should lay persons play in decisions about appointments? Lastly, there were difficulties about whether students should be committee members, an issue that more usually causes concern at the secondary level (Pettit 1980, pp. 142-8).

The present position in the various states is somewhat confused. In the Australian Capital Territory the attempt continues to extend maximum freedom to all schools. In South Australia, despite the administrative machinery that exists to give schools much freedom in SBCD, an official document signed by the Director-General of Education, has recently (April 1983) been published. Called *Into the 80s – Our Schools and their Purposes*, it aims to set the context within which curricular decisions will be made. Four 'priorities in education' are laid down; 'eight areas of the curriculum' are specified; and, in addition, 'teacher expectations' are named. In Victoria, in line with Ministerial policy announced earlier in 1983, the Education Act (1958) was amended in December 1983 to provide that a school council shall 'determine the general education policy of the school within guidelines issued by the Minister', though there is some difficulty knowing just which of the present advice to schools is to be defined as a guideline. Finally, in the Northern Territory, although some freedom is allowed to teachers to decide on curricula, a core has been defined for each year of schooling from Year 1 to Year 10 and is based on 'statements of objectives expressed in terms of student performance'.

There may be differences in the scope for SBCD allowed to teachers in each state, which clearly represent the policies of the various governments now in power, as advised by their experts in the education departments, but all have moved from the position where the centre made all but the minor decisions, leaving only details to the teacher at the chalk-face. Yet, despite this shift, there is some evidence to show that teachers have not taken the chances offered to them to make their own curricular decisions. For example, the practices of teachers in Years 7 to 10 in a sample of Australian schools were studied in the Curriculum Action Project at Macquarie University. The main conclusion was that 'on the whole having been given freedom of choice about their curriculum, respondents have chosen to implement what is generally labelled as a "traditional" approach' (Cohen and Harrison 1979, p. 261); routine, rather than reflective, decisions seemed to have occurred. Rice (1983) accounts for this same situation in Victoria in terms of 'hegemony'; that is, teachers have learned how those with power believe teachers should act. Curricular co-ordination in the schools no longer relies upon bureacuratic control, but on the holding of like ideologies by teachers and administrators and on the acceptance by teachers of the expectations of those with power about what the schools should be doing. Teachers, given freedom, are not so much too lazy to change their ways, but rather choose on the whole to do what they are expected to choose.

The specification by the South Australian Education Department of 'priorities', 'areas' and 'expectations' and the nomination of a 'core' in the Northern Territory are specific examples of the retreat by many governments from very liberal interpretations along each of the three dimensions specified earlier of what SBCD is taken to mean. The worldwide neo-conservative backlash against education has led to demands for greater accountability of teachers and particularly to a clamour over the numbers of illiterate and innumerate students leaving schools. In its most extreme form such claims on the curriculum rely upon the view that 'only *one* legitimate interest, the *public interest*' has any right to influence curricula (Boyd 1978, p. 580). Logically this implies only one curriculum and the only freedom for teachers might be to decide on minor details and on methods of teaching, but such decisions would take little or no account of sub-groups existing within any society and of the peculiarities of their contexts. Thus we reach the paradoxical situation where teachers are forced to teach a curriculum planned by others, and when it fails because of contextual circumstances beyond the control of those teaching it the teachers, not those who planned it, are criticised. In the present political atmosphere in many societies the result is that the government enters, or enters more deeply, areas such as curricular planning 'exposing them as new "problems" requiring administrative solutions' (Foster 1980, p. 502). Once again, great complexity and less freedom to teachers to take account of local conditions lead incidentally to dissatisfaction, and, more important, to a result which is the opposite of the original aim – students seem to learn less, not more.

Decisions in schools

It is assumed that SBCD depends upon the joint decisions of a number of teachers and, hence, can be examined using the same method of analysis as was employed when considering the decisions of individual teachers.

Knowledge at hand

Clearly the total knowledge available to a school staff on which to make curricular decisions depends upon the way in which teachers are able to co-ordinate the stock available to each. One must not jump to the conclusion that the sum of the knowledge of all the teachers in the school will be available to all. As Carson has put it:

> The irony is that in a group, knowledge useful to decision-making only accumulates if it can be shared by a majority . . . and it only accumulates in this way to the point where it becomes too recondite for the 'majority', after which the group's accumulated decision-making knowledge no longer measures up to the sum of knowledge of its individual members.
>
> (Carson 1979a, p. 48)

Little is known about the structures that schools have set up to make decisions about curricula. Personal observation in Victoria and anecdotal evidence from other states forces the view that these are various and on occasion inadequate. Some so-called curriculum committees are little more than finance committees, allocating funds made available by the schools' councils or the education department. In these cases decisions are much influenced by the amount of money available and the terms governing its use which may limit expenditure to particular resources, thereby forcing schools to implement certain types of curricula and this, indeed, may be the often legitimate aim of the department in such cases. A case in point is the Commonwealth's Participation and Equity Programme one of the main aims of which is 'to encourage young people over the school leaving age to participate in useful and fulfilling education and training activities in schools and TAFE' (Department of Education and Youth Affairs 1983, p. 3); the guidelines for this program make it clear that funds will be directed into particular parts of the curriculum including those concerning transition from school to work.

Certainly schools that have established a mechanism for examining the total curriculum of the school are rare. Most consideration of this issue occurs when problems arise in making the timetable and is of the order of the total number of periods per week for English or craft, rather than what English should be taught at what stage to whom, or whether craft or any other subject should be on the timetable at all.

Lawton (1983, pp. 68–9) has recommended that the way to tap to the maximum the knowledge available in the staff of any school, in order to allow all to participate in decisions and, thereby, to make all feel involved and committed, is to create a three-tier structure of committees relating to curriculum. At the school level a committee will preserve general balance and ensure coverage of the whole intended curriculum; the chairman would be the principal or his nominee, for example, the director of curriculum, and its members would include the heads of all departments. Under this committee would be departmental committees chaired by the various heads of departments and consisting of all their teaching members. Finally, there would be a number of interdepartmental committees, including full staff meetings and *ad hoc* groups of two or more departments, to ensure detailed integration across the curriculum. To include this suggestion here may look like prescription, but interestingly it coincides closely with much of the evidence from research concerning how to ensure that curriculum change occurs. Fullan has written, 'Within the school, collegiality among teachers as measured by frequency of communication, mutual support, help, etc. was a strong indication of implementation success' (1982, p. 121). Berman and McLaughlin put it this way: '. . . project outcomes did not depend primarily on "inputs" from outside but on internal factors and local decisions' (1975, p. 364). Given a system whereby teachers are appropriately rewarded within the school, they will use their knowledge co-operatively to make curricular decisions at the school level rather than merely act as individuals within their own classrooms.

Teachers are, however, willing to consult some outside sources to bring knowledge into the school where it is not already available to the staff. Consultants of many types are now available to teachers. One of the new specialisms that has developed in the last two decades in education is the curriculum consultant. In the educational field as in others consultancy has been professionalised. For various reasons teachers were often loath to consult outsiders in the past. Thus, because in Victoria the inspectorate, an obvious source of advice, became involved in assessment for promotion, teachers' unions wanted and were eventually able to ban them from classrooms. College and university lecturers are often seen as impractical in their approach. Rice (1983, p. 55) has indicated other reasons why consulting outsiders is difficult for teachers, but certainly unless such external supplies of knowledge can be tapped on behalf of schools decisions will often be taken that smack of the blind leading the blind.

Factors

All schools are set in a network of interactions with the community around them and these interactions put pressure on those who take curricular decisions. The staff of a school may interact with parents, employers, local politicians and prominent citizens, representatives of the education department and of teachers' unions and, in the case of independent schools, with former pupils' organisations and often with religious bodies of one denomination or another. Sometimes, even before the recent shift towards SBCD and lay participation, such networks have influenced the curriculum of a school. Thus, in two of the schools surveyed in Victoria during the early 1970s

Fitzgerald et al. (1976) found instances where curricula decisions were forced from outside on unwilling staff. In a small rural high school a conservative political group, the local branch of the League of Rights, managed to have a textbook on marriage and the family withdrawn from the school and to force English teachers to be very careful over the essay topics set for students. In an innovatory technical school parents forced the staff to withdraw from a very liberal position where students had wide freedom in choosing their curriculum and in deciding whether, indeed, to attend the electives that they had chosen. The school had to establish a more traditional curriculum because these parents felt that such schools were established as an avenue into apprenticeships and that a progressive curriculum did not guarantee the standard in the 3Rs that their children needed to gain an apprenticeship.

Schools are categorised analytically in different ways. For example, of the last two schools mentioned one was rural and the other urban. Fitzgerald et al. (1976) found some evidence that supports the view that the tight social networks still ruling in rural areas and the conservative nature of many of those living in the country have resulted in a closer interest by parents in the moral elements of the curriculum than is the case in the more loosely knit networks surrounding urban schools. However, the main categorical difference that influences curricular decisions is probably between state and independent schools. One obvious pressure, already hinted at, related to the religious nature of most independent schools. This pressure is most obvious in the Catholic system. Praetz (1980) has shown that Catholic schools in Victoria were as much influenced by the movement towards SBCD as non-Catholic schools, but that control over the curriculum in religious education was seen as a crucial need. As more money became available to the independent sector during the 1970s the Catholic Education Office became more bureaucratically competent and was able to devise and implement a common syllabus with related textbooks, to organise in-service courses for teachers and co-ordinators of religious education, and even to establish certification processes for teachers of this subject (Praetz, pp. 94–116, 132–6).

A much more subtle force is, however, also at work. Independent schools are not free. Parents pay fees, often high, and as a result the independent schools' students are very largely drawn from the middle class, and are, therefore, linked to the schools through the market. Parents can exercise the final sanction of not buying the service that is provided if they do not like or agree with the way that it is being delivered. Employers, too, have a powerful influence in that they will not hire the former pupils of the schools which they believe are not delivering a service of the quality they require. Independent schools are, therefore, ultimately in a market situation where their ethos and their general functioning is very much influenced by their clients. The schools to which the working-class children go are in a very different structural position in that they are not similarly linked in an organic way to their clientele. In the past the relationship was structured; more recently schools are related hegemonically to the education department, and thence to the political party in government. The decisions that bring curricular change are mediated not by the market, but by a bureaucracy (Connell et al. 1982).

Indeed, the aim of such participatory schemes as those in the Australian Capital Territory, South Australia and Victoria is to make schools more responsive to their publics, but real difficulties are raised. If the teachers in a private school decide to offer a curriculum that is fundamentalist in religion and very utilitarian in content, as long as the school breaks no state regulation regarding the general operation of private schools it will continue, provided parents are willing to pay for its services, but what limits should a government put upon its own schools where SBCD is the method of determining what is taught in these schools? As indicated earlier most governments give some 'guidelines' to their schools to indicate the curricular boundaries within which they may take their own decisions. Thus, the last Victorian Liberal government announced four very general aims from which more detailed objectives followed. These related to opportunity, achievement, values and the place of the community in education (*Hansard*, 12 December, 1974, pp. 4-5). More recently these have been interpreted specifically as guidelines prohibiting the teaching of sexism or racism. What is still at issue is the position of, for example, a Muslim private school in which Islamic law, which is fundamentally sexist and hence contrary to a guideline operating for state schools, is taught.

Interpretations of others

All those involved in the networks impinging on the school have their own interests which may or may not coincide with that of the school. In the two cases cited above—the rural high school where a textbook had to be withdrawn and the metropolitan technical school where the basis of the curriculum had to be changed—the interests of teachers and parents in the first case were moral and in the second were so opposed on academic grounds that compromise was impossible. The parties involved saw the issues from totally opposing viewpoints. Sometimes negotiation over differing interests results in compromise; sometimes it does not.

This is an important way of conceptualising what happens very often when curricular decisions are in the process of being made, and one to which we shall return. A case study of the fate of a curriculum development project in England in the early 1970s shows very clearly what can happen. A project team, based on a university, under the Schools Council set about developing an integrated humanities curriculum for junior secondary students (Shipman 1974). Three main groups were concerned, each of which had its own reasons for being involved; that is, each saw its different interests being satisfied by membership of this project. But, as the project developed, the three groups shifted their positions somewhat, coming to hold different reasons for continued involvement. The developers initially saw the achieving of collaborative curricular change as their interest, but eventually, as time pressed, they came to make decisions quickly and on their own without consulting the teachers involved, because only thus did they think that they would achieve the results, a set of materials, upon which their specialised careers depended. At the beginning the teachers saw a chance to be involved in determining the directions in which their curriculum would develop, but in the end they felt exploited because they were not consulted, and only continued to be involved in order to gain some otherwise unavailable free resources. The administrators in the local authority likewise had hoped for free assistance in their schools, but, when they perceived that the project was having administrative difficulties, remained involved only as long as this caused them no bother, since they still gained some prestige for their involvement in a Schools Council project. This research shows very clearly how decisions about curricular change, even for those taking part in the same project, are made in the light of the different perceptions of the interested parties and also shows that their perceptions will change through time, even, perhaps, to the detriment of successful implementation.

In a very similar way, but within one school, Finch (1981) shows the way in which the teacher in charge of the innovation, the teachers interacting with her, the students, their parents, and the principal and his deputy all had differing and changing interests as they introduced a new elective program into a US high school. A team under the leadership of one teacher in co-operation with students planned this curricular change. The teachers and students all aimed to reduce alienation amongst the students. Initially the principal gave nominal support, but suddenly he appeared to feel that he had a success on his hands which would help his own need for a successful career. At this point he began to give active and material support to the new program, acting as an advocate for it in the community beyond the school, thereby ensuring its continuation for the next school year. One important point that Finch emphasises is that the teachers were unable to judge the level of support given to them by the principal. This led to their feeling insecure and made it difficult for them to be sure just how much weight to give to their perceptions of support from the administration.

Weighting

At this point we are again considering how these teachers weighed three immeasurable elements — their knowledge, the factors involved, and their perceptions of others — against each other. Finch (1981) raises a further point here. In her study the teachers never considered whether the parents of the students involved could help their case. The thought never occurred to them that the parents 'might have the political leverage to obtain what they wanted and needed' (Finch 1981, p. 340). In this respect at least, the teachers took a decision more of a routine than of a reflective type, whereas weighing the evidence in other respects before making their decision was more of a reflective process.

One study undertaken in California has indicated some of the issues that appear to be taken into account when weighing evidence as teachers approach curricular decisions. Cannings (1983) made an ethnographic study of five curricular innovations in ten schools over a period of two years. He showed the priority given to 'local values and norms' in trying to make changes. Furthermore, the way in which these and other factors were weighed, even when considering the same curricular innovation, varied much from school to school. Yet each project, even though meeting a need peculiar to one school, was developed under the common influence of a local administrative authority, whose interest had to be given some priority. Principals played a minor role, more as appreciative advocates than as expert advisers. Finally, Cannings found that the logic of the decisions that were taken was on occasion difficult to understand. For example, in one case friendship seemed to govern where one innovatory project was located since a principal who was an old friend of the local administrator entered his office when the location of the project was under discussion; it was moved to his school. None of the existing conceptual frameworks really explained the outcomes that Cannings observed; none really explained how priorities were given in the weighting process. A modified version of the research, development and dissemination (RD and D) framework seemed most useful. When interpreting his data Cannings was trying to force it into a preconceived conceptual framework. The alternative is to trust that one's data is correct and the framework in some sense wrong.

Recently Toomey (1982) has suggested that neither the R,D and D framework nor the 'political brokerage' framework, alluded to *en passant* by Finch, is appropriate for analysing the way in which such co-operation decisions as SBCD are made. In a study of how new curricula in geography and in drama for the Victorian Higher School Certificate (HSC) were established Toomey has demonstrated how teachers in schools and as members of subject associations, administrators, and curriculum developers from both the education department and from the examinations board, all worked together to produce curricula after a period of intense negotiation lasting in each case more than a year. He refers to his framework as 'the coalitional approach'. This is in some senses a development of the political brokerage framework, but, instead of emphasising agreement, it emphasises the way in which those with differing interests and also with differing power conflict and interact. They form a network of interacting actors, often structured in several separate groups that are centred on an ideology, and the members of these groups have to work together through negotiation to form coalitions that are built within the network and against opponents. Ultimately, one coalition gains sufficient power to negotiate a curricular decision to which all actors can subscribe.

This process of coalition formation, however, is equally dependent upon the weighting process already referred to. Toomey has not thrown much light upon this element of the making of curricular decisions. He has, however, made clearer the setting within which the process occurs. We have to view SBCD occuring within a network of actors whose power is changing and who view themselves, and are viewed by others, as having changing interests as the process goes on. Furthermore, as Cannings (1983) reminds us, even in our supposedly rational society where ends and means are linked logically, serendipity can play a part in curricular decisions.

SBCD is, therefore, a difficult process about which to make generalisations, especially in view of the current lack of direct evidence on its workings. To return to the three dimensions isolated by Walton and Morgan (1981) and quoted at the start of this section, the following very broad conclusions seem possible. The degree of involvement of any school in SBCD depends upon the attitudes and knowledge available to the teachers concerned, and the area covered is similarly governed, as must be the approach taken by the teachers. But absolutely crucial to how a school goes about SBCD is the presence of administrative mechanisms created to tap the resources available inside the school and to channel what is available outside into any curricular project on hand. Clearly, the principal's role in this process can be vital.

The place of the principal

The principal is seen to have a special role of leadership and responsibility in the schools of most societies, but what is often forgotten is that the hierarchical structure with one man or woman at the top, seen by those both outside and inside the school to be in charge in some real sense and responsible for all the decisions and occurrences within the school, is a comparatively recent method of organisation. Only in the nineteenth century did most schools, especially at the elementary level, and in view of the very high staff-student ratios then prevailing, grow to a size where more than one teacher was needed. Thomas Arnold, who was Headmaster of Rugby from 1828 to 1842, developed a new administrative system when he appointed below him housemasters and prefects to help to run his rapidly growing school. Although his example was followed by the majority of the new and reformed secondary schools in mid-nineteenth-century England, whose influence was so great on the nascent Australian colonial educational systems, there were schools which were organised in other ways. Some Scottish schools, for instance, had councils of masters which were presided over by each master in turn; a similar system was also found occasionally in England (Baron 1970). In the 1970s the VSTA sought a similar policy for Victorian secondary schools and this was, perhaps, not surprising in an ideological climate which rated participation by concerned persons highly and most schools did have more or less complex committee systems. The principal is, however, still the final arbiter, at least in law and in the perception of the general public, even if he or she is no longer the 'tower of strength' of a century ago.

The hierarchy in schools is much flatter than in most formal organisations, largely because the training and qualifications of the teachers are usually more similar to those of the principal and of each other than is the case in other formal organisations. The authority of those at the top of the school's hierarchy depends not so much on their expertise as on their bureaucratic position. The head of a school department will probably be more expert in his own curricular field than the principal. This is true even when the subject concerned is that formerly taught by the principal, because many developments may have occurred since he left the classroom to become a school administrator.

In a highly bureaucratic organisation such as a large or even medium-sized secondary school the principal must pass the majority of the detailed curricular decisions down to those nearer the chalk-face. Even in a small primary school the contextual variables in any one classroom are likely to differ so much that no principal could claim to take full account of them in trying to decide curricular problems except at the level of the total school curriculum. Heads of departments, and subject and year co-ordinators 'enjoy considerable power to influence school outcomes' (Bartlett and Ogilvie 1980, p. 192). In primary schools a similar trend away from the monolithic structure where principal and deputy principal wield considerable, even detailed power over curricular matters towards a delegated system where classroom teachers decide curriculum within an overall school policy, often formed in a meeting chaired by the principal, is more often now the rule.

Yet the principal can still play a vital part in curricular decisions, though he or she may not always do so. In a well-known study in the USA Wolcott (1971) concluded that the principal was essentially a 'middle man' between the local authority and teachers, and students and parents in his school. Finch's paper (1981) to some extent supports this conclusion, though in her study, once convinced that the new elective program was going to work, the principal did play a more active role and procured resources for those who had taken the initial decision. Finch concluded her study by stating the view that teachers would have 'severe difficulties in attempting change and innovation in schools' without the assistance of the school administration. Fullan (1982, pp. 139–40) ends his review of the research on the principal's place in curricular change by noting that no study shows change to be impossible without the principal's help. About half at least of principals operate mainly as administrators, not as agents actively promoting decisions for change. As noted above, principals cannot be experts in all curricular areas, so Fullan concludes that the most effective role for a principal is that of facilitator or co-ordinator.

On occasion principals can find themselves in a very awkward position in that those in power outside the school may require some curricular change with which they disagree. Many principals in Victoria, for example, have expressed disagreement with the new legal requirement whereby their school councils now have responsibility for the school curriculum. But in this situation principals can shift responsibility away from themselves by making their position clear so that they earn less unpopularity as they force their teachers to adopt what has been required of them (Sarason 1971, p. 130).

The role of principals in independent schools is somewhat eased in achieving any curricular policy that they may conceive as their own, because, although when first appointed they inherit a staff of teachers, any subsequent appointees are in their own hands and teachers seen as likely to meet the needs of their new policy can be appointed by them. What has recently been made very clear by some events in Victoria is that school councils are responsible for ensuring that the purposes, usually religious, for which the school was founded are achieved. Thus, when the whole of the former Presbyterian Church did not join the Uniting Church, the remaining Presbyterians inherited several elite independent schools and have taken steps to ensure that a more fundamentalist position is taken in the religious education taught in these schools. It seems that they have even been willing to lose a principal to achieve this end. Presumably the new appointee will ensure that the staff, especially the new appointments, meet the need to create a new ethos in the school.

In most Australian state schools, because staffing is controlled from the centre, this is not the case at all, and the likelihood of achieving a staff all dedicated to some particular curricular viewpoint, even at the departmental level, is very low. Spear (1983) clearly indicates the constraint on curricular decisions of centralised staffing policy. When Spear's case-study school, Fern Tree Gully High School, was initially established, the principal was allowed to recruit his own staff because the school was seen to be 'experimental', so that only teachers favourable to his innovatory policies could be employed. When this administrative privilege was withdrawn the maintenance of curricular momentum grew difficult. One implication of such selective appointments should be noted in passing; teachers who are strongly socialised into the norms of a deviant school often find movement back into a more traditional school difficult, if not traumatic, since, amongst other differences, curricular decisions are made in such dissimilar ways.

The principal, then, can most often be seen as a facilitator rather than a direct innovator, though the latter position can occur. Fullan, basing himself on research with principals in Ontario, writes:

> The main point . . . is that serious problems at the implementation stage will likely go unresolved if the principal is uninterested, or even if he or she verbally supports the change but does not participate in some fashion.
> (Fullan 1982, p. 136)

Though principals may not themselves make any curricular decisions their felt concern will help the successful implementation of a curricular decision. The inclusion of the word 'verbally' in the above quotation reminds us that, as Gronn (1983, p. 1) has put it, 'not only do administrators spend much of their time talking and . . . this talk accomplishes administration, but . . . talk is used to do the work of tightening and loosening administrative control'. Through their talk with teachers involved in making curricular decisions principals create or relay much of the administrative context within which any curricular decision will be made.

Evidence from a study carried out in 1981 in Sydney supports this conclusion which is based largely on North American data. Brady (1983) administered two questionnaires to 277 teachers in 20 primary schools. He found, firstly, that the more supportive the staff perceived their principal to be, the more likely they were to perceive that he or she would use an interactive administrative framework for curricular decisions; secondly, that the greater the principal's emphasis upon a directive stance in curricular matters, the less likely were staff to see the use of the interactive method; and, lastly, that the more intimate the atmosphere perceived by staff, the more likely did they see the use of the interactive method for curricular decisions. Principals who are seen to support their teachers closely are more likely to be seen as offering to their teachers the opportunity for devolved and collegial decision making. One final comment upon this position can be drawn from Finch's (1981) case study. Principals and their deputies—in Finch's case-study school responsibility for the new curriculum was devolved to the deputy—have many and various problems on their minds as they help to create the context in which curricular decisions will be made, but teachers tend to focus on their own one present problem and forget all the competing interests within the school with which those at the top have to deal. Principals who can make a teacher with a curricular decision on his or hands feel that this matter and this matter alone is also their almost sole concern will create a context more fully supportive of that teacher than will four-ulcer principals doing eight-ulcer jobs, as they rush from problem to problem, never sinking their efforts deeply into any one of them.

Agents of curricular respectability

The framework

The conceptual framework presented in this monograph is now clear. Teachers, as individuals or as members of a group, decide either to make a curricular change or to maintain the curriculum as it is. This process of decision making, marked by much 'thinking in the future perfect tense', may be a long one as the final and irreversible decision of a whole series of decisions is made, or it may be brief. In either case the decision may be routine or reflective in nature. The outcome may be accepted by those in the networks surrounding the school or it may not. There is a more or less wide range of curricular tolerance, so that some decisions fall well within what is acceptable whilst others, lying on the edges of this range, challenge the limits of acceptability and on occasion may fall completely outside the range. In this latter case obviously, but even for decisions on or near the limits of the range of curricular tolerance, action may be taken by those in power—the politicians, or their officers, administrators in the education department—to bring the deviant decision makers back within the fold.

The boundaries of curricula tolerance are often unclear and teachers may without knowing it make a decision to teach something that is perceived by those concerned to be in some way offensive. This view may be taken out of ignorance or it may be the result of the fact that there are no curricular norms operating for the material concerned. Thus, until recently the teaching of material concerning conservation or nuclear disarmament had never been considered at all and it was only when one or more teachers decided to include these topics in their curricula that their respectability became an issue. In a real sense in this case curricular deviance was impossible beforehand, as no relevant norms existed against which behaviour could be measured. The teacher whose case Johnston (1978) presents did not perceive himself to be a curricular deviant until a parent named what he was teaching about sex to be 'dangerous knowledge'. In

England syllabuses for religious education are officially approved in each local authority. In the past these have been assumed to refer to Christianity, but with the post-war influx of migrants the inclusion of other world religions such as Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism has occasionally been allowed, even if only in a syllabus in comparative religion. However, when religions became equated with ideologies, and one authority approved teaching about Marxist ideology, steps were taken at a higher level to stop the spread of this 'dangerous knowledge' (Musgrave 1978, pp. 96–9). A new boundary of curricular tolerance had been drawn.

Clearly, ranges of tolerance are negotiable. In Australia, as indicated earlier, in recent years central control of the curriculum has diminished. As a result a greater variety of content has been taught. Most of the new material has been acceptable or fallen within the existing limits of curricular respectability. Occasionally material has been rejected on political, moral or religious grounds. More recently, a conscious attempt seems to have been made in many states to narrow the range of curricular tolerance and to move in a conservative direction. Administrators have reacted either to public opinion or on their own account, perhaps in anticipation of public demands, by redrawing the boundaries of tolerance. This has been achieved by such suggestions or specifications for core curricula as those issued in the Northern Territory, or by documents outlining ideal curricula, for example, the recent official paper in South Australia or, finally, by unofficial hints made by administrators to principals or teachers.

Those in schools draw knowledge about curricular matters, whether relating to content or to pedagogy, from many sources, but they tend to give more credence to some sources than to others. In all normative fields there are leaders who act as agents of respectability in relation to cognitive or moral information or to behaviour. An influential concept in research into the transmission of all forms of information has been that of *the two-step flow* (Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955). According to this framework information moves from its source through local influentials to recipients. Thus, new fashions in dress or cookery are sought by interested men and women from local 'trendies' who are well informed about what is happening on the national or even international scene. In education much the same process has been found to be at work in the spread of new curricular material. Carlson (1965) plotted 'the social itinerary of modern math' amongst school superintendents in two areas of Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Innovative individuals were more often younger and had been in their present positions a shorter time than their conservative colleagues; they were given higher social and professional status by their peers and were better qualified. These persons were local agents of curricular respectability, particularly in regard to what new information was worthy of note. They were accorded authority where problems of the curriculum had to be faced. The question can be asked: To whom did these local influentials turn? They related to national agents of curricular respectability whose authority was wide, perhaps even international. Later in this monograph some mention will be made of such figures.

The concept of *authority* was used twice in the last paragraph. Authority is given to those who are seen to wield power legitimately, but it has several sources. In his classic analysis Max Weber named three bases for authority (Gerth and Mills 1948, pp. 78–9, 295–7). Legitimacy might rest, firstly, on legal and/or rational bases; in this case it is exercised in the bureaucratic mode. Thus, principals by virtue of their office have the legal right to exercise certain power, though they may devolve it to their teachers. They are, for example, legally responsible for the day-to-day teaching in their schools, but give their staff the power to make the detailed decisions. Secondly, authority may rest on affective attachment, in which case it is exercised in the charismatic mode. Some university teachers are greatly loved or greatly hated and as a result their work is either welcomed without much questioning or dismissed without much thought. An example was F. R. Leavis whose work in literary criticism had immense influence, both positively and to an extent negatively, on secondary school curricula (Musgrave 1973). Finally, authority may rest in tradition and be exercised ritualistically. In many independent schools elements of the curriculum remain because recipe decisions have been taken yearly to continue to include them in the timetable. Classics was in this position for many years; even when a reflective decision was made, the grounds upon which its inclusion continued were those of tradition (Campbell 1970).

Agents of curricular respectability can, therefore, be seen as bureaucratic, charismatic or traditional, or indeed, exercise elements of each type of authority. In each case those exercising authority will tend to have a different battery of sanctions available to support their authority. Bureaucratic authority relies heavily upon rewards and punishments laid down by regulation, for example, fines and reprimands or promotions. Traditional authority is dependent upon customary sanctions such as those operating through patronage; loyalty or disloyalty in times past will be remembered when resources are to be distributed in the future. Charismatic authority depends upon affective attachment; the leader of an educational trend will recognise his or her disciples and ignore others. We shall next examine a number of case studies which exemplify various types of curricular decision in order to identify where agents of respectability of each type are located in the social structure and how they operate.

Examples

Teacher-based decisions

In Johnston's paper (1978) an individual teacher decided to teach some aspects of sex education but, as we have seen, his material was defined by one parent as 'dangerous knowledge'. The NSW Education Department by a subtle series of administrative manoeuvres withdrew the teacher from his school, charged him on a number of counts, placed him before a tribunal which found him guilty on a much reduced number, and then allowed him to return to his school. 'In deciding not to punish the teacher with a fine, demotion or dismissal, the department protected itself from public scrutiny' (Johnston 1978, p. 111). By this method the administrators avoided any direct clash with the NSW Teachers' Federation, which had already been peripherally involved by giving advice to the teacher. In this instance we see that a bureaucratic agent—'the office'—had reacted to a traditional agent—the parent—with an in part bureaucratic, but in part charismatic, agent—the union—standing in the wings.

School-based decisions

In some cases groups of teachers in schools make curricular decisions that are innovative, but which, though perhaps seen as testing the limits by the teachers concerned, are not defined as deviant by the relevant agents of curricular respectability. A very vivid case of such redrawing of the limits of curricular tolerance concerns the Sydney Road Community School in Melbourne (Freeman 1982). In this small school which served a largely migrant population the curriculum was constantly under negotiation between students and teachers, with parents and other interested local inhabitants being involved if they wished. Such a curriculum, though extremely difficult to achieve, can be taught without much external challenge provided it falls within the current limits of tolerance up to about Year 11, but in Victoria at Year 12, the HSC, the one remaining external examination, which allows entry to tertiary institutions including universities, has to be considered. Successful negotiations took place in 1974 whereby the school's certificate was to be validated by a local college of advanced education. Three other tertiary colleges, but no university, agreed to consider this certificate for their entry procedures. In 1975 a curriculum, negotiated in segments on a six-weekly basis, was taught and a 'general descriptive statement on the whole year' was issued as the final certificate, though the teachers at that point saw themselves to be 'only on the edges of tackling the consequences of the gap that existed between the language and experience of the Sydney Road student and the requirements of solid academic material and study methods of tertiary students' (Freeman 1982, p. 23). This certificate formed the basis upon which a group of similarly minded schools built the Schools Sixth Form Tertiary Entrance Certificate Group (STC). In 1981 the new Victorian Institute of Secondary Education (VISE), a state agency unlike its predecessor the Victorian Universities Secondary Examination Board (VUSEB), accredited this certificate, thereby giving it equivalence to the HSC, though the universities did not grant it equivalence to the more formal versions of this examination, which the Victorian university teachers regarded as prerequisites to study in a university.

In this case two bureaucratic agents were centrally involved; firstly, the examinations body, which, being a government-financed agency, involved, secondly, the education department, which was also responsible for the school. Unusually, the students were powerful agents in this particular case. In addition, members of the community could always act as possible agents of respectability and in this case agents of respectability meant not just the parents, but others such as, for example, employers or influential local political figures. Furthermore, the principal of this school was himself regarded in the local educational scene as a charismatic figure who was in close touch with a number of other secondary teachers to whom the same status had been given.

This was an example of an acceptable new curriculum, but there are cases of the teachers in a school deciding upon change and endeavouring to implement their decision unsuccessfully. One of the best known recent cases occurred at the William Tyndale Primary School in Islington, London, where the decision to implement a 'progressive' curriculum almost caused the school's demise (Gretton and Jackson 1976). A new head who had recently gained an advanced qualification in primary education was appointed to this school. He planned to put into action a type of team-teaching for which he had the support of most of his staff. As is often the case in the switch from a more formal curriculum to one founded on a very different basis, there were considerable initial difficulties with the children, many of whom came from somewhat deprived backgrounds. Numbers fell; the parents objected; ultimately, a lay manager of the school complained and the head of an infant school housed in the same building also complained officially that the chaos now ruling in the primary school made worthwhile work with the children for whom she was responsible impossible. The local authority, perforce, became involved and, after trying to solve the issue by persuasion, was unable to contain the furore that ensued when the situation was fully reported in the press and on radio and television. Particular attention was paid to a strike by some of the teachers at the school which was not backed by their union. Parliamentary questions were asked. In the end the local authority had to set up an official inquiry under a Queen's Counsel, during which all the teachers who were involved were suspended on full pay. The final outcome saw the principal dismissed and the teachers reprimanded and appointed elsewhere. Although many issues of an administrative nature were raised by this case, from the point of view of curricular decision making it is clear that the teachers in this school had either gone beyond the local range of curricular tolerance or had taught very badly a curriculum that might, if taught well, have been accepted, so that what was done was unacceptable to parents and to the community at large.

In this case, the influential agents of curricular respectability were the local authority, but interestingly, the central Ministry of Education managed not to become overtly involved. Therefore, the local, but not the national, inspectorate played a role. Once again parents had a part, though the school lay managers were more openly influential. In this instance latent agents were important, for example, the local inspectorate and the local branch of the teachers' union. Perhaps the most important agent new to this analysis was provided by the reporting of the case by the various media who worked on public opinion in such a way that the newly planned curriculum was perceived as radical and based on abstract theory that was impractical under the conditions then ruling at William Tyndale School. The final result was that the decision of this school staff was defined as deviant and beyond the range of curricular respectability.

Externally based decisions

Some decisions are made outside the school as was the case with the establishment of Fern Tree Gully High School described in Spear (1983). The Education Department of Victoria decided to establish an experimental school, following principles publicised in documents from the new Curriculum Advisory Board established in 1966 on the initiation of R. A. Reed, the Chief Inspector of Secondary Schools. The experimental curriculum was successfully implemented. In this instance, a charismatic figure marshalled the bureaucratic department behind his efforts and, at least initially, his decision was accepted as respectable.

Education departments can also be involved in decisions that force schools not to carry through curricular decisions that they have already made. In the mid-1970s the Commonwealth Curriculum Development Council (CDC) set up teams in all Australian states to develop major sets of materials for the teaching of various aspects of social education at the secondary level. The Social Education Materials Project (SEMP) ultimately produced eight sets of materials, one of which related to the family. These materials were adopted by independent and state schools throughout Australia. During the same period another set of relevant materials, Man: A Course of Study (MACOS), which had been developed in the USA under the supervision of Professor Jerome Bruner, an internationally respected psychologist, was also adopted in some Australian schools. In Queensland a pressure group in support of fundamentalist Christian principles lobbied strongly against both MACOS and the unit on the family in SEMP, on the grounds that teaching based on these materials could undermine the family, a social unit basic to the continuance of Australian society in its present moral form. The state government, sympathetic to conservatism, took the decision at Cabinet level to order the education department to ensure that neither the SEMP unit on the family nor MACOS was used in state schools in Queensland (Smith and Knight 1981).

In this case a pressure group acted as the agent of respectability in determining the moral curriculum of the state, but not the independent, schools in Queensland. In passing, it should also be noted that the campaign was based, as is often true in such cases, on 'the political use of controversiality' (Boyd 1978, p. 601). Arguments were often emotionally advanced, either without data or research, or by quoting such material selectively. Agents of respectability need not exhibit rationality in the ways in which they define material as deviant.

One other case of interest in this context is the materials prepared by an organisation called Enterprise Australia to teach the virtues of the capitalist system. These materials were created outside the educational system and were taken up more often by schools in Victoria than by those in South Australia. Here the relevant agents were, firstly, large industrial corporations in co-operation with some trade union interests, at least ostensibly respectable to the majority in a capitalist society, and, secondly, the teachers' unions, more strongly organised to influence teachers and the public in this instance in South Australia than in Victoria (Wickham 1982–83). Apart from its intrinsic interest, this case shows that in the economic sphere large companies and some trade unions can act as agents of curricular respectability.

The agents considered

Lawton (1983, p. 155) has specified five levels of responsibility for the curriculum: national, regional, institutional, departmental, and individual. Thus, in Australia curricular decisions may be made by the Commonwealth Minister through the CDC; by a state's Minister of Education who may, for example, specify guidelines; by a principal; by a subject co-ordinator, or by a classroom teacher. In this section the intention is to look at the position of agents of curricular respectability at the national/regional and institutional levels, where institution refers to other than educational institutions. Lawton's last three levels as they relate to schools have been considered in previous sections.

National/regional

Ministers of Education rarely interfere directly in the curriculum. Two British ministers made classic comments in this respect. George Tomlinson, Minister in the Atlee Labour Government after the Second World War, said, 'Minister knows nowt about curriculum', and perhaps more clearly Tony Crosland in 1972 said, 'I'm not in the slightest degree competent to interfere with the curriculum. We're educational politicians and administrators, not professional educationists'. When ministers do become involved in curricular issues it is usually because there are political implications. The Queensland decision to ban MACOS and some SEMP material was of this nature. The Victorian guidelines relating to racism and sexism are similarly dealing with problems upon which the government has taken a political stand. Furthermore, in these cases weighty bureaucratic sanctions support the decisions.

Those public servants who professionally advise any minister from time to time act in curricular matters on the minister's account. Thus, many educational systems issue lists of recommended texts. In some cases, especially in the USA, teachers have to use texts chosen from these lists, though in such cases as Victoria the lists are no more than guides to teachers to help them in their curricular planning. Public servants also, however, issue advice, reports and other documents in their minister's name and these carry great weight because of their source and because teachers feel, whether rightly or not, that the minister may be involved in support of whatever traditional sanctions are used to make these non-legal directives stick. One of the most common, yet subtle ways in which public servants can influence curricular decisions in the direction in which they wish is by publishing abbreviated versions of reports which are so long in their original form that those in the schools may well not read them. The departmental version may omit suggestions uncongenial to its officers and highlight those they favour, thereby channelling only part of the available knowledge to those making consequential curricular decisions.

David (1977) made a study in England into the ways in which local education authorities (LEAs) made decisions. This study is relevant to the educational systems of Australia and the USA, because in both societies schools are run through somewhat similar-sized administrative structures. Large school districts in the USA and states, and more so regions, in Australia operate similar-sized and structured school systems. David found that two main styles of decision making appeared to be used by top administrators. There was, firstly, the 'conciliator' who

> tends to stress the mediator or brokerage role of the officers, whereby the officers recognize their problems of 'public accountability' and the arbitration between the potentially conflicting interests of the various groups requiring or demanding an education service.
>
> (David 1977, p. 41)

Secondly, there were the 'educators' who focussed upon 'the specifically educational elements in their tasks. They try to stimulate innovations in the educational service' (David 1977, p. 41).

'Conciliators' chose objectives to fit possible solutions, defined by the overt demands of politicians; for example, they fitted their plans for reorganisation of secondary schools to the buildings available. 'Educators', on the other hand, chose objectives and devised appropriate solutions that were consonant with existing educational theories or recent research; for example, secondary reorganisation might be planned on a Year 7 to 12 basis because such a structure has shown lower drop-out rates (David 1977, pp. 191-2). 'Conciliators' tried to ensure the support of the politicians, community or parents for their schemes, whilst 'educators' stressed their legitimacy as professionals in defining problems and in outlining the scope of solutions and available coping techniques (p. 198). The sanctions open to each type of administrator are somewhat different, more bureaucratic in the latter than in the former case.

In Australia there has been a move to regionalisation, in the main in answer to the political demand for more teachers and lay participation in school decisions. As a result public servants have, except for issuing guidelines or primitive forms of core curricula, largely ceased using the 'educator' style and have been driven to adopt the 'conciliator' role, because participating mechanisms both allow and encourage more interested parties to be involved in curricular decisions. The more democratic the process of running a school becomes, the more conflict is likely and, hence, the more need there is for state departments to act as conciliators in enabling curricular decisions to be made at the regional and school levels. Yet, as noted, departments do reserve to themselves the power to decide the framework within which SBCD occurs, and when advising ministers on curricular matters public servants will act as professionals, that is as 'educators', though the politicians themselves may be forced to ignore the advice and themselves act as conciliators because of the broader political issues.

When departmental administrators consider programs they tend to use two premises, thereby constructing a specific type of context within which decisions will be made (House 1974, p. 227). The first assumption is that the important outcomes of education are measurable, and especially important in this context has been the idea that test scores are available in most dimensions of the curriculum. The way in which administrators answered the demand by politicians for accountability in the 3Rs or 'basics' is a good example of this assumption at work. Departmental administrators in many states in the USA recommended or assisted in the establishment of minimum-competency legislation, sometimes expressed in terms of reading scores; in the UK and in Australia mechanisms were established to monitor test scores, especially in reading and arithmetic. The second assumption is governed by what House (1974), calls 'the *doctrine of transferability*'; administrators and certainly politicians tend to believe that a few 'magic solutions . . . will be widely accepted and have highly generalizable results in different local situations' (p. 213). There is an irony here, since those at the centre often seek solutions to curricular problems by the research, development and diffusion process, assuring transferability of their solution to all contexts, whilst simultaneously proposing SBCD. House has put the dilemma well: '. . . all people are rational in pursuing their own self-interest but . . . different situations define self-interest in such a way that what is rational for one man seems irrational to another' (1974, p. 225).

This paradoxical situation points to the need for new conceptual frameworks for thinking about the place of policy making in education. Boyd has written about 'the professionalisation of reform' (Boyd 1978, p.54). The implication is that at every level decision makers are acting rationally and knowledgeably so that curricula meet the contextual needs of each school. But this vision brings to those at the centre fears that the system will run out of control. As soon as administrators are no longer seen as only educational technicians there is the need to specify the goals of the system so that the guidelines within which curricula will be tolerated are specified. This, in turn, raises the problem of who shall set such goals where there is no consensus about them. Clearly this is the task of the politicians. It was in just such a situation of conflict that in Queensland MACOS and parts of SEMP were banned, however questionable the final decision may seem to many educators.

Certainly since the Second World War there has been a constant battle in most societies between those wanting to establish a rational long-term plan within which the various elements of the social structures can be developed and politicians who often have had to meet sudden crises with *ad hoc* measures. This is especially true in education. Commissions have recommended and their reports have been adopted. Yet crises occur, usually economic in nature, so that the cost of the already accepted changes is judged to be too high. In both Australia and the UK the planned expansion of the tertiary sector was stopped in the mid-1970s when economic stringency became severe. In the same two countries centralised curricular planning agencies, the Curriculum Development Centre in Australia and the Schools Council in the UK, were also cut back. Incrementalism replaces rational forward planning. Educational bureaucracies become more involved in *ad hoc* decisions to meet crises and the politics of education grows more complex as interested groups, particularly teachers' unions, try to stand firm to maintain what they see as ground won earlier (Boyd 1978, pp. 618–21).

What can be seen very clearly is that agents of curricular respectability at the national and regional level act from a position of power, because they have the sanctions of the bureaucratic system in their hands. Resources may be made available or not depending on whether the decisions made locally fall within the limits of tolerance. Though individual teachers and even schools may not have the capability to withstand such agents and the powerful bureaucratic and traditional sanctions that they wield, their unions may be able to do so. However, at times of economic crisis, even their unions may not have this capacity. A great clamour did not stop the Liberal–Country Party government cutting back the CDC in 1980. The political context strongly delimits the curricular plans of state schools. Independent schools are rather less limited, but even they have to meet registration criteria in most advanced societies, and there have been instances in Australia where these regulations have been used to bring pressure upon those schools that were seen to be deviant.

Institutional

Curricular decisions, especially at the secondary level, have in the past been seen by both those within the educational system and those outside it to be closely linked to external examinations of various types. This is particularly true of any entrance qualification for the universities. Such examinations have become accepted by other tertiary institutions for entry, by employers as a surrogate for a secondary leaving certificate and by the general public as a credential in its own right, since a pass often gives entry to certain levels of the labour force, for instance, to the lower levels of the public service. This example clearly shows that institutions other than schools are an important part of the context within which curricular decisions are made. Here three such institutions will be briefly considered: the universities, teachers' unions, and the economy.

1 The universities

Since the late-nineteenth century when entry examinations became common, the universities in Australia, as in the UK, have been deeply involved in the organisation and operation of school examinations, primarily to ensure that their new students have an acceptable standard of general education. Though the syllabuses for these examinations are specified in some detail, there is no very exact link with first-year university courses; students may, for example, repeat material in their university courses. Universities are not only interested in the specific knowledge that they see as prerequisites for their courses, but also in the general background of their students. They, therefore, demand a spread of subjects to be taken for entry qualification.

There has been a long battle between universities and schools over who should assess these examinations. Teachers see themselves as professionals, competent in assessing the worth of their students, whilst those in universities feel that teachers will favour their own students and are not as technically able to provide marks that are comparable as is an expertly run examinations board. Since the 1970s considerable changes have occurred in the degree of control exercised by universities over external examinations. Syllabuses are now usually restricted to Year 12. Furthermore, varying degrees of internal assessment have been permitted to schools. In Queensland an externally moderated, totally internally assessed system now obtains; in Victoria there are totally school-assessed subjects accredited by VISE, but the universities will not accept these for entry. They will, however, now accept courses in which not more than 50 per cent of the total marks has been internally assessed. Indeed, recent (1983–84) attempts by VISE to restructure their offerings have led to considerable opposition from the Victorian Universities.

All the subjects included in such examinations are the result of a process whereby a syllabus is agreed by a committee whose members are representatives of the various interests concerned: teachers from state and independent schools, and representing any subject association likely to be involved; tertiary teachers, especially from universities; representatives of the local education department and, on occasion, of employers and parents. Negotiation produces a syllabus which is accredited. Such courses do perforce influence curricula in the schools. The immediate impact is on what is taught at Year 12, but, particularly in the case of mathematics, the sciences and languages, there is no chance of reaching the standard required in a course lasting one year, so that the Year 12 course governs what has to be taught in previous years and, perhaps, even back into the primary school. What has to be noted is that this is a particularly important effect in Australia and the UK, but that the majority of the research on curricular problems has been undertaken in the USA where this demand from the tertiary sector is almost non-existent, so that teachers or local administrators in the USA should, at least in this respect, have far greater freedom for curricular manoeuvre. In the USA universities influence curricula in a more informal way than they do in Australia. They act through, for example, curricular development teams and through the provision of textbooks written by eminent authors. Authority is charismatic rather than bureaucratic.

2 Teachers' unions

In Australia teachers' unions are mainly involved in industrial issues, but at several points earlier instances have been noted where unions have taken action that had curricular implications. A clear instance was the campaign organised by the South Australian Institute of Teachers to prevent the adoption in the schools of the materials prepared by Enterprise Australia. Unions have occasionally used their power for political purposes or on industrial issues in a way that has had influence on the curriculum. In 1971–72 the Department of Education in New South Wales came to an impasse with the teachers' federation over the load to be taught by teachers in the state's schools at a time when there was a severe shortage of teachers. The question of whether two periods per week of sport should be a compulsory part of the curriculum assumed importance in the negotiations.

Eventually, after a brief strike, the department withdrew a directive eliminating sport from the curriculum. Sport was reinstated and the original teaching loads were preserved. In fighting an industrial battle, a curricular matter had become a side-issue (Spaull 1976, p. 63).

During the same period in Victoria the VSTA tried unsuccessfully to withdraw its members from teaching courses for the HSC examinations in order to force the government to provide more places in the tertiary sector in the hope that inequality between the social classes on entry, especially to the universities, might be reduced (Toomey 1984). One is forced to the realisation that a teacher's curricular decisions may be governed by the power of local teachers' unions which, particularly in good economic times, can use strong sanctions against their members in an attempt to persuade them not to break union ranks.

In all states there are also subject associations whose aim is professional, not industrial, in that they function as agents of respectability for the subject or activity concerned. The Commercial Teachers' Association of Victoria is an appropriate example. It publishes a journal, runs conferences, develops materials and provides a source of advice to teachers in the field, and not just in Victoria but also throughout Australia. Most associations are rather smaller. In some cases the local education department assists by seconding a teacher to act as secretary to the assocation, thereby furthering its efforts and giving it an element of bureaucratic legitimacy. These associations also have links with the universities or other tertiary institutions where the original work in their subject is being carried out. Very rarely is the knowledge base of a subject to be found in the school, though innovatory pedagogy may be created by teachers. The agent of respectability for the academic knowledge from which the curriculum is constructed is usually the university and this can be filtered through a professional association, but a professional association can much more readily be a source of new teaching styles or materials or methods, since it consists of practising teachers whose pedagogical credentials are seen as respectable and who may have, at least locally, some charismatic authority.

3 The economy

The medieval European educational system was closely tied to the provision of the important professionals of the times: clerics, lawyers and doctors. Though its remit widened after the Renaissance and the Reformation, by the nineteenth century the Industrial Revolution had again brought to the fore the problem of providing adequately trained members of the professions, which by then included engineers, teachers and administrators. In addition, eventually the economic benefits of the 3Rs were appreciated by those in power. Compulsory education followed and decisions were then needed about the curriculum for a mass literate society. More recently elements of scientific, aesthetic and physical literacy have by general consent been added to the 3Rs. In this situation employers have a direct interest in ensuring that the schools take into account their views of the minimum educational needs of the labour force. Since the beginnings of the economic crisis of the 1970s many employer groups have become increasingly critical of what the schools are achieving. They claim that too many young persons are illiterate and innumerate and deduce that the academic content in the curriculum is too low. They also claim that young people are lazy and ill-disciplined and cite these views as evidence of the dysfunction of the moral content.

The way in which the media, themselves an integral part of the economy, can be used to construct a 'problem' is itself a subject for sociological interest. In this case 'primary definers' drawn from amongst the agents of curricular respectability, for example, employers or their representatives and conservative academic experts on education, were used to stake out the issue — standards of literacy and numeracy had become a problem. These views were next reported in a somewhat different form by the media as public opinion. Finally, in a circular process, the agents of respectability quoted the reports of the media as support for their own position. The point at issue is that curricular decisions are forced on schools in a context that has been constructed in this artificial way (Literacy Working Group 1979).

The correctness or otherwise of the charges pushed by such a campaign is not here at issue. What matters is that many employing groups have become vociferous agents of curricular respectability, making criticisms of the schools, particularly demanding that moral qualities are taught through stricter discipline and that academic knowledge be ensured by core curricula, and by the teaching of vocational skills and such scientific knowledge as that concerning computers which is seen to have great contemporary relevance. Political and religious interests have for long exercised an influence as agents of curricular respectability, but employers have now begun to occupy a similarly strong position.

Trade unions have rarely been seen as exercising influence over curricula although recently the ACTU and the AFMWU have produced and distributed curriculum packages for schools. Their interest has been more political than educational in that they have worked for such causes as equal opportunities for all rather than to influence curricular decisions. The one exception to this generalisation is in the field of technical education, where the unions have always been interested in apprenticeship education, but even here, certainly until very recently, the main involvement has stemmed not from an interest in curriculum as such, but from the way in which training impinges upon the control of entry to apprenticeships and the conditions of employment for apprentices.

To conclude, several agents of curricular respectability influence the decisions that teachers, whether as individuals or as groups, make about their curricula. The influence of these agents may be traditional or more often charismatic or bureaucratic. In the last case, influence may operate overtly and there may be powerful sanctions available to support it. More usually, however, such influence operates latently in a hegemonic fashion. Teachers perceive that an agent defines a subject or its content in a way that they feel they must follow.

Conclusion

In this review of evidence, drawn from several countries, we have examined the making of decisions about the curriculum in an administrative context. For those wishing to understand its complexities this social reality can be constructed usefully by seeing it as a process, often taking considerable time, in which each decision, or part thereof, is located in the network of actors who are perceived by the teacher or teachers concerned to have relevance for this particular decision. Their perceptions may be awry or incomplete so that others too may be influential. The more usual conceptual framework, that curricular decisions occur in a bureaucratic framework, does not give much purchase on plumbing the full complexity of decision making, since such a view tells nothing of who is seen to have what power, whether in the form of relevant knowledge or of sanctions that might be brought to bear on teachers whilst they make decisions or after their curriculum has been changed. Nor does a simple bureaucratic conception of decision making say anything about the nature of any decision; whether, for example, it is made in a routine or a reflective manner.

Decisions about curricula involve negotiations, often between coalitions whose power is uncertain and probably constantly changing. Furthermore, all those taking part have different interests at stake and these interests may well change throughout the period of negotiation, so that the teachers and others concerned could come to an agreed position for reasons very different from those that they held at the start and, although all now acting in concert, they may be doing so for very different reasons. All involved will, though, have regard to what they judge to be the current limits of curricular tolerance, though they may in fact have an incorrect view of those limits. The boundaries of this range are watched by agents of curricular respectability of various types, official and unofficial. They may be charismatic authors, traditional politicians or bureaucratic public servants, all of whom have a somewhat different battery of sanctions, positive and negative, that they are perceived to be able to, or indeed will, wield.

Up to the mid-1970s there had been a shift towards curricular decisions being taken at the level of the school, but the exact dimensions of these decisions have rarely been considered and unsolved problems remain about how lay participants shall most appropriately be involved. Indeed, there are also major difficulties in ensuring that the perceived experts, the teachers, are fully knowledgeable, so that the locally decided curriculum can fit the particular context neatly. In adopting any element of school-based curriculum development those in schools will have to consider, amongst much else, the knowledge available to them, how their initial training moulds their perceptions of curricular matters, and their own administrative mechanisms, as well as the many external factors seen to impinge upon them.

The making of decisions about the curriculum is a complex process and teachers who wish to make a change may have a hard row to hoe, particularly if their principals do not support them strongly. This is particularly the case where they run into opposition from local or national agents of respectability, when they may be defined as deviants who are trying to transmit dangerous knowledge. This is not a comfortable situation for any teacher, whether he or she is a member of a group or on his or her own. The majority of teachers seem to avoid it, because they know, or perceive that they know, the limits within which they may take curricular decisions. The influence of such perceptions is extremely powerful and is one of the main supports to the present slow rate of change in the school curriculum. Furthermore, this same limiting process probably also goes a long way to ensuring our present political hegemony.

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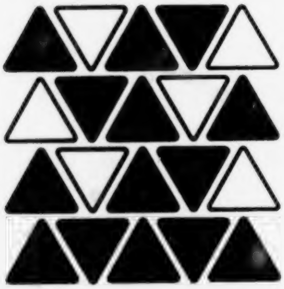
Readings



1

The limits of curricular experience: An analysis of experience and possibility[1]

Peter W. Musgrave

> . . . a theory capable of interpreting educational change . . . must take into account the existence of profound educational conflict without either assimilating the parties involved to conflicting social classes (Marxist tendency) or attributing to the values involved some order of ascendancy and subordination according to social needs (structural-functionalist tendency).
>
> M. Scotford-Archer and M. Vaughan.[2]

Introduction

During the last decade much analysis of education has been couched in the Marxist terminology of a capitalist ruling class trying to impose or maintain hegemony over the working class and of 'the correspondence' of the activities or the outcomes of the educational sector to the structures and processes of society in general or of the economy in particular. Theoretical disagreement has been rife and so far the detailed historical evidence adduced for such an account has not gone unchallenged.[3] Furthermore, the admission is sometimes made that the concept of hegemony is difficult to use in any closely defined way. In these cases, where the term is used in a weaker sense, the analysis tends to find a situation where members of the ruling class – although rarely succeeding, and then but briefly – constantly try to achieve a state of hegemony.[4] Such analyses may be more realistic, in their acknowledgement both of methodological problems and of the substantive difficulties for the ruling class in their efforts to solve recurring 'crises in hegemony',[5] but so far they have made no real attempt to explain the *educational* causes, if any, of their failure to gain lasting hegemony.

In this paper I propose to start from this failure and, because much recent thinking has focussed upon the curriculum, to examine as a case study certain historical evidence concerning the development of the school curriculum in England since about 1850, especially at the elementary level, in an attempt to answer two relevant important questions:

1. What limits were put during this period upon curricular freedom?
2. What general process seems to produce these limits?

Finally, I shall ask what implications this analysis has for theories of curricular development and, hence, perhaps, for the place of the concept of hegemony in such sociological thinking.

The English Curricular Experience

Beeby's Four Stages

My starting point is an *ex post facto* analysis by the New Zealander, C.E. Beeby, published in 1966 and based on his wide experience as an educational administrator in Micronesia. Beeby suggested that the educational systems of developing countries passed through four stages:

1. The Dame School Stage: ill-educated and untrained teachers taught an ill defined curriculum in an unarticulated educational system.
2. The Stage of Formalism: teachers with some education and training taught a highly organised curriculum under close supervision, especially through examinations and inspection, using the 'one best method' and focussing upon the school class as a whole.
3. The Stage of Transition: teachers with secondary education and more training taught a less tightly specified curriculum under somewhat relaxed controls.
4. The Stage of Meaning: well-educated and highly trained teachers aimed to develop an understanding of the meaning of a very loosely specified curriculum, using materials and methods that matched individual needs, and without close external supervision.

This basically descriptive and, perhaps, Whiggish, framework has been used to order accounts of the historical development of the primary curriculum in Tasmania and of some aspects of teacher education in Australia. Furthermore, one small questionnaire study successfully used these same stages to compare administrators' perceptions of education in the mother country, Britain, and two industrialised former colonies, Australia and New Zealand, with a number of such newly independent, developing Pacific societies as Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and Western Samoa.[6] There would, therefore, seem to be some possible analytical leverage in ordering data relating to the history of the curriculum in England using these four stages but also, unlike Beeby, in asking questions about the course and directions of development, remembering that ultimately the aim is to try to explain the failure of the ruling class to achieve hegemony.

The English Evidence

Although the government began to devote public monies to elementary education through religious bodies from 1833 there was no direct public control of the curriculum until 1862. Prior to the 1830s many dame schools, often little more than child-minding establishments, existed but between 1840 and 1846 Kay Shuttleworth initiated reforms that led to a supply of somewhat better educated and trained teachers. By 1856 one HMI rated eighty per cent of the schools that he inspected as 'fair', describing a 'fair' school in these terms:

> In the first class the children will be able to read a page of Natural History . . . with tolerable fluency . . . [and] answer collateral questions on this, not well, but not preposterously ill; . . . have a general knowledge of the distribution and conventional divisions of land and water on the surface of the globe; . . . work a sum in compound addition two thirds of them without a mistake; . . . write a short account of any object named to them which they had seen or read about . . . with trifling errors of grammar and of spelling.[7]

The teachers who taught this, on the whole formal, curriculum or the clergy responsible for them had, however, begun to be a little adventurous in some aspects of the curriculum so that in 'good schools' another HMI reported that 'physical Science, natural history, political economy and . . . drawing' were taught. Indeed, the first major battle between those in schools and those in the central administration over curricular content, except in the field of Religious Instruction, occured in the 1850s about the teaching of Science. An attempt was made to base the Science curriculum on 'Common Things', a 'Science for the People', but opposition both from academics and from those with power at the centre prevented this development.[8]

By the late-1850s there was considerable disquiet amongst those in power, or those able to influence them, because they felt that the elementary schools, even though not catering well for all their pupils, were, nevertheless, too well-developed in their top classes. Comparison was made between a cheap or free elementary education (of some standard and worth) and the education coming to be called secondary (often poor and not very useful) for which the middle class had to pay. Because of such feelings the Newcastle Commission on Elementary Education was appointed; its Report (1861) recommended the adoption of a very formal control over the elementary curriculum. This was established through a system of inspection leading to payment of teachers by their results in teaching the Revised Code of 1862.

Pressure, particularly from the Inspectorate (then at odds over this matter with their political masters), but also from the teachers and their unions, now growing in power,[9] led to a gradual widening, after 1867, in the offerings earning grant under the Code. In the Code of 1871 a sentence concerning the teaching of Science, more particularly in relation to teaching through using natural objects, shows clearly that the move from the Stage of Formalism towards that of Meaning was beginning:

> Such plans would necessarily differ in town or country, and the suitability of each to the school in which it is to be adopted must be a matter of discretion.[10]

Discretion to vary materials, content and methods was beginning to be allowed to teachers.

In 1886, a Royal Commission (Cross) was appointed to inquire into the workings of the Elementary Education Acts. In their report, published in 1888, the Commissioners can be said to have considered that

> the Standards of examination in elementary subjects were too useful to be safely abandoned, but could be so modified as to permit greater freedom in classifying scholars . . .

The process of granting discretion to teachers, ***but within bounds***, was continuing. Another recommendation in the same vein was that,

> while the introduction of a set of official text-books was not advisable, a more or less extended programme, showing the range of study intended to be covered by the Code, ought to be accessible to teachers and to managers.[11]

Many of the changes suggested by the Cross commissioners were embodied in the Code of 1890. 'Manual Instruction', for example, was allowed to count for 'attendance'; the pressures at work here will be seen below to be both economic and educational. In 1894, further encouragement was given to the teaching of 'Domestic Economy'. As was also true in the case of broadening the content of the 'Physical Exercises' allowable for grant, pressure came largely from those interested in the health and hygiene of the nation rather than from any idea of preparing boys and girls better for the work-force. Such forces, militarist and imperialist in aim, though usually couched in medical terms, were particuarly strong after the Boer War.[12]

The Code of 1895 marked the end of many of the remaining close controls introduced in 1862. For example,

> In this year begins the abolition of the annual examination in class subjects of schools for older scholars. This change represented a further step towards freedom and elasticity of schools for the teacher both in framing his curriculum and in carrying it out in detail.[13]

The curricular implications of the Education Act of 1902 were not great and, in the main, concerned the time-table for, and the provision for opting out of, Religious Education. Following this Act, there was a period of severe conflict between the Board of Education and some Local Education Authorities (LEAs) over this subject but, after the first world war, the system of locally agreed syllabuses, upon which the 1944 Education Act was so successfully built, developed. By this date, religion had become so much less important to most people that it was possible to make opting out of compulsory Religious Education more difficult.[14] More recently, there have been attempts in several LEAs to widen the agreed syllabus of compulsory Religious Education so that religions other than Christianity, and even such secular ideologies as humanism or Marxism, may be included. In effect, the religious and the political systems enshrined in the constitution could be seen to be under attack from the agreed syllabus of the one compulsory subject in the schools. Furthermore, the political ideology suggested for compulsory teaching was fundamentally critical of the ideology of the ruling class.

Reverting to the chronological account of the development of the Elementary Code, by 1911 the situation was that in some LEAs

> . . . the question of curriculum [was seen] as a matter to be settled between the teacher on the one hand and the Inspector on the other. Others were inclined at first to require from their teachers adherence to syllabuses and time-tables made out in varying degrees of detail, but there is now a tendency to relax this stringency where it has been adopted.[15]

Variations existed and were more often coming to depend upon the initiative of the teacher. The quality of the changes can be judged by examining developments in individual subjects. In English, for example,

> where a few years (before) there would have been two lessons in Dictation to one in Composition, the proportion has been reversed.

Creativity was on its way in! In Science, and particularly in Geography, rote learning had diminished and local conditions around the school had started to influence the content of the curriculum. Furthermore, the belief of the Inspectorate was that

> one of the characteristic differences between the methods of to-day and those of a few years ago lies in the increased amount that is now left to the children to find out for themselves.

In both Geography and History there were available 'many more [text] books than there were a few years ago'.

All of these changes were summed up under two broad headings in the *Report of the Board, 1910–11*:

> (i) The child's life in school is being brought into closer relation with his life out of school. [Inevitably] materials and experiences var[y] with the locality . . . Hence follow[s] (a) the increasing difference between the schools in one area and those in another . . . and (b) the growing divergence, after a certain stage, between the education of the boy and that of the girl.
>
> (ii) . . . the influence of the school is spreading more and more widely over the whole sphere of the child's interests and activities.[16]

We have only to consider these optimistic judgements of the, to us, illiberal Code of 1911 — more liberal though it undoubtedly was when compared with the Revised Code of 1862 — to understand how much more freedom teachers to-day have gained over the curriculum. What Beeby called the Stage of Meaning has presumably been approximated. One of the weaknesses of Beeby's account, useful as it can be in gaining analytical purchase on problems of curriculum development, is that he assumes the concept of 'Meaning' to have some absolute content though he does not define this. Beeby never asks: 'Meaning for what?' or 'Meaning in what context?'.

In this regard one instance referred to above assumes great importance. The attempt to teach a political ideology (Marxism), that was opposed to the established ideology, as part of the compulsory agreed course in Religious Education met with strong opposition in the city concerned from representatives on the local council elected to support the existing system. This incident forces us to ask: 'Can those in power in any society permit the curriculum, particularly that taught in state provided schools, to become so wide in content that it can be seen to be preparing future citizens to bring about the demise of the present social structure?'. Or to rephrase the question in the terms that Beeby uses: 'Which Meaning is to be transmitted in the curriculum?'.

Before trying to make any generalisations about the nature of the processes at work in the course of curricular development in any society some attention must be given to the nature of the demands for changes and the opposition to such demands.

The Process Analysed

In his inaugural lecture Dahrendorf was concerned to show the origins of material inequality in societies, but his analysis rested on the need for a hierarchy of power to preserve the norms by which any particular society was defined. Those who are seen to deviate from social norms, or to attempt so to do, will be checked. As Dahrendorf puts it:

> Society *means* that norms regulate human conduct: this regulation is guaranteed by the incentive or the threat of sanctions; the possibility of imposing sanctions is the abstract core of all power.[17]

The next step here, then, must be to examine instances of challenge to ruling curricular norms. Such challenges may bring about crises which, as Habermas notes, can be seen as objective indices of the 'unresolved steering problems'[18] of a society. Therefore, if one wants to unravel the causes of and limits to curricular development, an examination of curricular crises should be a worthwhile approach. Finally, in this section, the attempt will be made, based on the evidence so far presented, to outline a generalised account of curricular development from which can be adduced some notion, at least in theory, of the bounds of the freedom available in curricular choice.

Challenges

Here three challenges to curricular normality, that were reported in the previous section, will be considered. The main direction of the argument is that many of the influences that appear to be diverting the curricula, considered in this case study, towards the Stage of Meaning are not easily describable as economic, even interpreted in its indirect sense to include political elements.

The first challenge to normality, in the elementary school curriculum considered above, was in the field of Science and occurred before the introduction of the Revised Code. Demands for a 'Science of Common Things', which would more closely match the mind and motivation of the elementary school child, originated from an Anglican clergyman responsible for a school at King's Somborne in rural Hampshire. The logic of the Rev. Richard Dawes' case was supported by a number of eminent academics including, for example, John Henshaw, Regius Professor of Botany at Cambridge. Their challenge was defeated on two grounds. Other academics, largely under the influence of Huxley, had the power to define this version of science as contrary to ruling paradigms; the nature of physics, chemistry and botany were seen to be different from that of the suggested curriculum and support was given to a more traditional form of Science for schools, best described as a science of natural history. The other opposition case was grounded in an altogether different argument, also still heard to-day, that separate curricula, whether in Science or any subject, should not be socially divisive by reinforcing the identities of the different social classes.[19] Clearly, in the latter case, an argument about curricular change based on the political nature of capitalist society was influential but it only underpinned part of the total explanation of challenge and response and could also be applied to the situation of dominating and dominated groups in non-capitalist societies.

The second challenge to be considered relates to the introduction of hand work into the elementary school. In the years prior to the Cross Commission, considerable criticism had grown up that the elementary curriculum was becoming 'clerkly'. This tendency can probably be attributed to the contemporary feeling that such an education opened up valued avenues for social mobility and this was felt particularly strongly by teachers, that is, by those responsible for passing this curriculum on to pupils, who had also often themselves become upwardly mobile through this 'clerkly' learning. The Cross Commission took account of the demand for a more apt curriculum for future workers and circularised ten counties asking for views on manual instruction. Only between a quarter and a third of school managers and head teachers favoured its introduction; some teachers opposed it because the subject was seen as one for technical schools, whose curriculum was perforce closely tied to the economic structure. The Commissioners, however, recommended its introduction.[20] Yet the arguments used to support the content and methods eventually used in the schools were not dependent upon economic advantage, but upon the educational case made by those favouring various Scandinavian craft movements, for example, Sloyd.[21] Once again, the institutional bases of curricular challenge and response were more complex than often portrayed.

Lastly, and of great importance to the argument here, the case of Religious Instruction (later Education) also shows a very mixed pattern of institutional influences. Until the early years of the twentieth century an explanation of the development of this subject in schools may be grounded largely in terms of, first, an aristocratic support for the established church which, secondly, yields to the assaults of the nonconformist middle *and* upper working classes. Yet, as the twentieth century advanced, the changing nature of Religious Education can be traced to the lessening salience of religion as a social institution, to the loosening paradigm of theology itself and to changes within the demographic structure, although the final challenge of converting compulsory Religious Education into, at least in part, compulsory Political Education was checked by conservative political groups.[22]

Crises

The development of Religious Education has been marked by a series of what may better be termed as crises, defined as Habermas uses this term, since '*social integration* [was] at stake'.[23] This way of viewing crises can be seen, in this context, to be an extension of Dahrendorf's concept of challenges to 'established norms'.

The introduction in 1862 of the Revised Code can be viewed as a definite response to what was seen as a crisis by those with power, largely still aristocratic in their nature, to bring the elementary school system and its curriculum back under their control. This form of schooling was to be for the lower classes and was to be minimal in content. The financial arrangements descending from Kay-Shuttleworth had permitted the uncontrolled growth of a form of education that seemed both fiscally, and educationally, inefficient and too wide in content to the rulers, the aspiring new middle classes and many of the civil servants who served these groups. Under these threatening circumstances, the growth was checked — as it had been a little earlier, in the case of the new Science curriculum, and as it was to be a hundred years later, in the case of the suggested innovations in Religious Education.

So far, mainly due to the method followed here of using successive Codes as data, the emphasis has been on the academic, not the moral, curriculum though, of course, this division is largely an analytical one. In recent times, however, many curricular crises seem to have arisen over the moral aspects of what is taught. Usually, certainly in Australia, such instances have involved a single teacher. One particular case of a secondary teacher in New South Wales who was accused by a parent of teaching 'unsuitable lessons' — in that the material he used related to sex — has been usefully analysed in sociological terms. New South Wales Education Department supported the criticism and suspended the teacher for five months whilst the matter was investigated, although ultimately the teacher was, in effect, found not guilty. The main concept used to organise the analysis of this incident was that of 'dangerous knowledge'. Such knowledge was dangerous because

> in blurring the conventional boundaries of his pedagogy, the teacher . . . dislocated the unwritten ideological consensus.[24]

Controls were successfully used by the State administration to exclude the dangerous knowledge, even though the teacher was eventually not formally disciplined.

Sometimes whole schools are seen as attempting to teach dangerous knowledge. The, by now, well known case of William Tyndale School is an example. In this primary school, a pedagogy, with its supporting organisation, was established whose aim was to transmit a certain set of moral values and behaviour, characterised, in particular, by great freedom and wide personal choice. Some parents, and others connected with the school, came to object so strongly that ultimately the LEA had to hold an official inquiry that resulted in the closure of the school.[25]

Though an argument might be mounted that this school was called to account not because it taught dangerous knowledge, but because it was inefficient, there seems no doubt that the crucial parts of the public debate were couched in terms of dangerous knowledge. Once again the moral curriculum of a school was seen to be dangerous and, in this case, a complex amalgam of those with power ultimately prevented its teaching.

The Process Itself

Once an educational system has developed beyond the Dame School Stage, teachers are trained to a level where they are able to begin to think for themselves, to question and to criticise. Like most intellectual workers they wish for autonomy. This implies that there is, within the educational system itself, a force at work that tends to encourage curricular change. Gouldner has noted that many significant social tensions derive from the conflict between the professional and the propertied fractions of the middle class.[26] Teachers, as intellectuals, do not always wish to exercise, in Gramsci's terms, 'the subaltern functions of social hegemony'.[27] There develops, therefore, within education itself great pressure towards conflict over what may be taught.

This force drives the curriculum towards, and is particularly pronounced in, what Beeby called the Stage of Meaning. Beeby appeared to assume that in this stage all would make choices that matched the liberal democratic regimes which he ideologically favoured. Yet not all teachers have seen this as a definition of meaning and, in addition, what some teachers have seen as a liberal and democratic curriculum has been defined by the general public, or by the powerful often on behalf of the general public, as dangerous knowledge. When a crisis ensues, agents of respectability respond by bringing power to bear to eliminate from the academic or moral curricula elements which they see as so dangerous that they are beyond the bounds of curricular tolerance. Such reactions may occur at the local level, as was the case at the William Tyndale School, or at the national level, as has perhaps been demonstrated by the recent discussion in the UK of a core curriculum. The process may work through adults or children; an example of the latter channel occurred when secondary pupils refused to co-operate in the Schools' Council Mathematics for the Majority Project, because they defined it as 'not proper maths'.[28] In brief, curricular innovation is as inevitable as is the occasional and limiting response by which it is defined to constitute dangerous knowledge.

Implications

Theoretical

Crisis in the curriculum may be a sign of some deeply seated societal crisis, but according to the analysis here, curricular crises are from time to time inevitable and are rooted in the schools themselves once a society has an educational system of a relatively well developed nature. Some teachers will challenge the established norms by trying to teach dangerous knowledge. Habermas has pointed out that

> improved schooling of cognitive capacities increases the probability that dissonances between proffered patterns of interpretation and perceived social reality will arise and intensify the problem of identity.[29]

It is to this social process, not to any explanation at the psychological level, to which one is appealing when one says that the educational system is marked by some tendency not to reproduce the social structure that set it up that is, not to ensure hegemony. The system has autonomy, though within certain limits, the boundaries of curricular respectability are patrolled by the powerful of various social institutions.

Furthermore, to analyse the relationships between education and other parts of the social structure in terms of a correspondence principle that focusses only on links to the economy, even when done in an extremely sophisticated manner,[30] overlooks both the complexities of the other social institutions interlocking with education and the autonomous influence of education itself. A subtle analysis of the comparative salience of various social institutions must be undertaken. Furthermore, if the focus in such an analysis is put upon challenges, responses and crises, any tendency to reify social institutions should be avoided. The direction of development in a society will be seen to depend ultimately upon those controlling its steering mechanism and this may be, for example, capitalist, socialist or, as we now once again realise, theocratic in nature, but those with power from the whole range of social institutions, and not just the economy, have here been shown to have a possible and even perhaps, from time to time, the ultimate influence upon decisions about what are acceptable curricular choices.

Practical

This theoretical position has wide implications for those wanting to make curricular changes. All in education must bear in mind that there is a socially determined range of tolerance, often not yet manifestly defined, within which curricular variation is permissible and outside of which innovators cannot trespass without some interested person or group feeling that contemporary social norms are threatened. Curricular freedom is not absolute but relative to the local and the national social structure. This very complex and, for those in the game, often extremely vexatious situation can only be described as political. In the terms used by Scotford-Archer and Vaughan, whose work was cited at the beginning of this paper, it will be marked not merely by 'domination' but by a fluid social reality born in the inevitable 'assertion' of teachers wanting to challenge contemporary curricular normality in very varied ways which are not always immediately perceived as challenges. Many humble, not practical, aspects of school curriculum can be analysed in such apparently abstract terms. As an example and in conclusion, I would cite a parent's comment on the teachers in a rural high school in Victoria:

We can't expect better dressing from kids until the teachers dress better. The meeting with staff we had last month only one teacher was in a dress. The rest were wearing blue jeans and one was wearing thongs.[31]

Notes and References

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2

Secondary education for all: The evolution of policy and practice in Victorian secondary schools, 1968-1978

Sheila Spear

With hindsight we can begin to understand the crisis in Victorian education in the 1950s and thus begin to understand the changes which took place during the 1960s. The principle of universal secondary education was, for many years, a slogan rather than a reality, but it served to draw attention to the tension between changes taking place in the post-primary student population and the unchanging nature of the school system which served it. Victoria's post-primary schools had a strong occupational orientation, whether directed to university or technical colleges. But occupations were changing rapidly with economic expansion, while the curriculum remained unchanged, unsuited both to the flood of new students and to the social and economic conditions of the world in which they would live. 'Irrelevant' was the word which many of those students used to describe their education. Yet so long as the high school curriculum was dominated by external examinations at Years 10, 11 and 12, there was little incentive to change.

The post-World War II baby boom was a widespread phenomenon, but the problems it posed to educational systems everywhere were exacerbated in Australia by a massive intake of migrants, many from non-English-speaking countries. The Victorian system, in particular, was stretched to breaking point. An especially large migrant intake was not readily absorbed into a system already stretched beyond its capacity by years of political parsimony, and suffering an acute shortage of buildings, funds and teachers. In the 1960s pressures within the high school system became acute. This article will examine some of the impact of changed conditions on Victoria's state high schools during the decade 1968 to 1978, and will explore the response of one school, Ferntree Gully High School, which made a deliberate attempt to face those new conditions. A 1962 UNESCO report on Australian education commented: 'For the money expended Australia has had very good value. Her educational services are very economically run. There seems little doubt, however, that the expenditure on public education has been well below that of other English-speaking countries'.[1] A more outspoken view was that of R. A. Goldman, summing up his impressions after a visit to Australia in 1963: 'If God had wanted to create a poverty-stricken shambles with the greatest educational inequalities possible in an affluent society, He would have invented Australia'.[2] Those judgements, made of Australia as a whole, were especially true of Victoria. Between 1956 and 1967 enrolments in state high schools increased almost threefold, from 56 000 to 141 000. Retention rates of older students also rose rapidly. In 1950 only 10 per cent of the students who had enrolled in the Form 1 (Year 7) intake in state high schools had survived to Form 6 (Year 12), 704 students in all. Of students entering high school in 1950, the proportion continuing into subsequent forms was 95%, 67%, 47%, 23% and 9%; for the 1960 intake the corresponding rate was 95%, 84%, 70%, 45% and 24%.[3] Class sizes rose to over forty students in 40 per cent of high school classrooms in 1962, while over three-quarters had more than thirty students. The number of teachers in training increased from 5000 in 1960 to 13 000 in 1970, but even so the percentage of permanent secondary teachers—that is, those who met the educational and professional qualification requirements—had fallen from 81 per cent in 1952 to 62 per cent ten years later.[4]

The strain on resources was only one aspect of the crisis, for there were qualitative problems as well. Inevitably, many of the students, children of parents who had had little schooling themselves, were not being adequately catered for within the existing curriculum. The Director of Education, F. H. Brooks, conceded in 1965 that the schools were failing to meet the 'wide variety of abilities and interests' of the students[5] and a 1968 research study confirmed that these problems were particularly acute in inner-suburban schools.[6] The problems created by the rising demand for extended secondary education were familiar throughout post-war Europe and Britain, but the large numbers of non-English-speaking migrant children in Australia magnified the problems enormously. In 1947 Victoria's population of one million included almost 20 000, or 2 per cent, who were born neither in Australia nor Britain. By 1971 the total population had risen to three and a half million, and the non-Australian, non-British born proportion to 12 per cent, nearly half a million in all.[7] The concentration of newly arrived migrants in specific areas resulted in some schools receiving a substantial proportion of these students while others were barely affected.[8] As a consequence dissatisfaction with the existing curriculum was not felt equally throughout the secondary schools.

There were signs that the educational community was becoming aware of the dimensions of the crisis. In 1960 and again in 1964 the Australian Council of Education, consisting of Ministers of Education from each state, issued reports stating the needs of state education throughout Australia: 'The provision of adequate education in Australia today constitutes a national problem ... There is a wide gap between the needs and demands of the community for education and what State governments can pay for'.[9] The problem was not simply one of maintaining the existing level of schooling, but also of providing an education more attuned to technological developments: 'The maintenance of present standards is not enough to ensure this nation's future place in a world where educational and technical standards are rising competitively'.[10] The Commonwealth government responded with new funding for secondary and technical education, with grants for science laboratories (1963), curriculum revision (1968) and school libraries (1969) and scholarships for secondary and technical students (1965). The Commonwealth was now a direct participant in post-primary education; a recognition that education was an issue of national, not merely state, concern. At the same time rapid expansion was taking place at the tertiary level throughout Australia, though Victoria lagged behind.

Victoria's provision of university places for 4.8 per cent of its 17- to 22-year-old population was lower than the national average of 6.4 per cent.[11] The University of Melbourne was, until 1961, the only university in the state, but after enrolments there increased 50 per cent in four years from 1956 to 1960 to a total of 11 000, two new universities were opened. Monash enrolled its first students in 1961 and La Trobe in 1967. By 1970 there were 27 635 students at the three Victorian universities. But even greater expansion was occurring in technical education at the tertiary level. In 1965 seven senior technical colleges affiliated to form the Victorian Institute of Colleges. Five years later the number affiliating was sixteen. Enrolments at VIC colleges rose from 14 570 in 1967 to 24 180 in 1970, with an increasing proportion of full-time students. Tertiary technical education was soon to become larger than the university sector.

But Victoria's high school curriculum remained narrowly selective, and still oriented towards university courses. The division of students between junior technical and high schools at Year 7, and the division of high school students between professional, commercial and general courses at Year 9, no longer reflected the opportunities available for post-secondary study. In addition, the greatly increased range of options for skilled careers and the declining proportion of unskilled jobs made it imperative to offer students vocational guidance and educate them more thoroughly before decisive specialization took place. As early as 1959 the Secondary Division of the Department of Education in Victoria reported 'increasing reaction against the restrictive influence of University prerequisites',[12] but while the University of Melbourne Schools Board, which set the high school matriculation examination, was replaced in 1964 by the Victorian Universities and Schools Examinations Board, the VUSEB did not have a vastly different view of its function. Its Standing Committees, like those of the Schools Board, included secondary teachers as well as inspectors and university faculty members, but many teachers felt that representation of secondary teachers, especially from the state schools, was inadequate. The external examination came increasingly under fire not only for its inhibition of curriculum reform but also for its certain failure of many students. Victoria's Chief Inspector of Secondary Schools, R. A. Reed, was one of the critics of the examination system. 'Education', he wrote in 1967, 'is carried out in the confident expectation of failure. More than this, we actually build failure into the system. We think of success and failure as absolutes capable of exact determination without recourse to anything but a very artificial examination process'.[13] The examination system served, it was later pointed out, as a substitute for a school policy catering for all students:

> Let us be frank about this and admit that the examination system does save schools a lot of trouble . . . All you have to do is to swap your educational policy for the Handbook and all your problems are solved . . . In a busy world this is very convenient. But it fails to demand that schools are doing what they ought to be doing—asking whether their educational policies are sound, and whether their policies are being carried out.[14]

There were teachers anxious to question existing policies, and a number of curriculum experiments were taking place at junior secondary levels. But frustration was growing, and with it conflict between teachers and the Education Department's central administration. In 1965 the Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association held the first stopwork in the history of Australian education. In the following year the Secondary Division of the Education Department took the first step towards reducing control by the universities of the secondary schools' curriculum and towards increasing the responsibility of teachers to adapt that curriculum to meet the needs of all students of secondary school age. The Secondary Division in 1966 supported proposals for the abolition of the Intermediate (Year 10) Examination, the first of the three-step hurdle towards university selection.[15] Reed then established a Curriculum Advisory Board (CAB) to carry out a review of the entire curriculum of the first four years of high school and to attempt to define the purpose of secondary education as a 'phase of education in its own right and not merely as a preparation for tertiary education'.[16] This was the first move ever in the history of the Education Department in Victoria to seek outside participation, and it sought more than a revision of the secondary school course of study. It invited a thorough examination of the function of state secondary education.

Initially the CAB adopted a conventional approach to its task and directed its Steering Committee to prepare a statement of the aims of secondary education. Each member of the Steering Committee submitted a statement of aims but, thoughtful though some of these statements were, they revealed a diversity that made collation impossible. They also revealed underlying philosophical differences so disparate that any attempt to tease out their implications would both compound basic dissension and be unlikely to produce specific or acceptable guidelines to teachers. As chairman of the Steering Committee, Reed suggested a new approach. Drawing on a survey prepared by L. W. Downey for the American National Education Association,[12] he presented a working paper that listed all the tasks that schools are called upon to carry out. Educational tasks were defined as falling into two categories: those that were seen primarily as the responsibility of schools, and those which were carried out primarily by other agencies, such as families and churches, but in which schools had a secondary or supporting role. The Steering Committee then set about listing all the tasks under the appropriate headings. This approach turned out to be even more divisive than the statements of aim and, after weeks of preparatory work and hours of discussion, culminated in heated exchanges about the place of religion, health and physical education in schools—physical education being perhaps the most contentious issue of all. The way out of the impasse was provided by two members of the Steering Committee, Bill Hannan of the VSTA and Gwyneth Dow of the University of Melbourne. Believing that there was a shared consensus underlying the dissension created by the discussion of school tasks, they sought to build on this by focusing on shared concerns about the problems in the secondary system. An *ad hoc* and informal group set to work, and from their discussions emerged the suggestion that the Steering Committee should focus its discussions on the content of the curriculum and the methods by which it was taught. Thus the acquisition of knowledge was established as the central problem to be considered. Reed, acknowledging the unworkability of the previous approaches, agreed to change direction. His flexibility and willingness to adapt and learn undoubtedly influenced other members of the committee and contributed to its success.[13] The subsidiary problems were also outlined as part of the new approach. The first was somewhat clumsily referred to as 'preconditions of learning'; the second was concerned with those agencies and resources outside the schools which shared a number of educational tasks and which could supplement and support the work of schools. These three areas provided a framework within which the problems of secondary education could be discussed more fruitfully. It was a framework which retained a focus on the central tasks of secondary teachers.[14] As it turned out, the third area of inquiry, which concerned the relationships of schools with other educational agencies, did not bear fruit, but reports from the other two areas were endorsed by the CAB in March 1968.

These reports examined different aspects of the secondary school curriculum. The first, 'Principles relating to the conditions of learning', examined the school environment in terms of its conduciveness to learning. Well before talk about the 'hidden curriculum' came into vogue in educational discourse, the CAB report considered school organization, classroom management, and the general values and culture of the school as 'hidden' or 'tacit' features which fostered or inhibited learning. A major contribution to this aspect of the CAB's work came from the Education Department's Psychology and Guidance Branch through its representative on the Steering Committee, J. R. McLeod. The Psychology and Guidance Branch was developing an approach in which the school's pastoral care functions, rather than being carried out by specialist counsellors, were seen as integral to the task of teachers. The goal was to create a supportive, co-operative environment in which teachers and students worked together to achieve the intellectual goals of education for all, in place of the competitive environment in which these were achieved by only a few. Psychology and Guidance Branch staff had begun working with teachers to develop 'interactive' classrooms, in which the emphasis was on helping people to learn to help themselves, and specialist counselling help was reserved for extreme cases. The CAB incorporated this into its approach, stressing that this supportive environment was a precondition to successful learning for all students.

The primary intellectual function of schools was emphasized in the CAB's second report, 'Principles relating to course construction', which suggested ways in which the traditional curriculum could be improved to fulfil this function more successfully. These included an emphasis on the unity of knowledge, in contrast to the separateness inherent in the subject-based curriculum, new attention to the processes as well as the products of disciplined inquiry, and a particular concern for relevance to the students' lives.

During the next two years the CAB published reports on the place of literature and of science in the secondary curriculum, and also on streaming as a means of organizing students, and its effects on learning.[10] But from the beginning of 1968 the attention of Reed and the CAB turned more directly to the task of implementing curriculum reform in the schools. The CAB decided to sponsor two pilot schools—Moreland High School and Ferntree Gully High School—and members of the Steering Committee began to work with teachers on curriculum plans. Bill Hannan was seconded by the Education Department to work on the project fulltime and he was assisted by members of the CAB and the Psychology and Guidance Branch. Meanwhile Reed, with his assistant, the late David Satchell, encouraged state-wide participation of secondary teachers in what became known as the Secondary Curriculum Revision Project. In a carefully planned series of discussions at school, area, regional and state levels, schools were invited to review the existing curriculum, discuss the need for change and propose new directions. After a state-level meeting, held at Burwood Teachers' College in September 1968, representatives from the conference met with representatives of the CAB. This meeting produced a 'Statement of Principles' to guide curriculum revision, which was circulated by Reed to all Secondary Division schools in December of that year.[21]

The Statement of Principles began to clarify the role of secondary education in providing for the fullest possible development of each student regardless of her/his vocational destiny. 'Secondary education', it affirmed, 'should be non-vocational for as long as possible', that is (according to a footnote added by Reed) 'not directly tied to some particular form or forms of employment'.[22] Office practice, shorthand and typing, academic courses leading to university entrance, and practical courses such as home economics, woodwork and metalwork all had a place in the education of children of secondary school age, but their justification should be guided by educational rather than vocational criteria. Similarly they should be seen as equally relevant for girls and boys: 'Boys and girls should be encouraged to work together co-operatively in all subject areas [and] there is no reason why both girls and boys should not participate in crafts which are traditionally restricted to one sex or the other'.[23]

The Statement of Principles served as the curriculum policy document of the Secondary Division of the Education Department for more than a decade. Its practical implementation, however, was in the hands of the schools. The response of the schools to this task can be gauged to some degree by examining the reports of the 1968 discussions.[24] The extent of participation varied from schools in which the reports were written by senior staff alone to those in which the entire staff met to review the curriculum together. In many schools teachers debated whether well-defined 'subjects' or more loosely determined 'areas of study' should be the organizing principle of curriculum content. Some schools were ready to move towards subject integration in an attempt to gain greater coherence in content and closer co-operation between subject teachers. Even those who urged retention of the subject basis of the curriculum showed a new concern about existing fragmentation and the need for more personal support for students, though the suggested remedies varied greatly.

Widespread reservations were expressed, too, not so much about the principle of reform as about existing conditions in the schools. Large classes, inadequate accommodation and shortage of curriculum materials could all render curriculum reform unfeasible. Secondly, some teachers, though enthusiastic, doubted their own capacity to implement new practices, recognizing that neither their training nor their experience had prepared them for a new approach. Thirdly, many schools commented on the administrative policies of the Department of Education, which made the development of a new curriculum at school level implausible, in particular the mobility of staff caused by promotion procedures and the inability of the inspectorate to carry out its advisory functions.

The areas of reform suggested by the CAB reports and the school discussions provided a basis for the first steps taken by the schools. But no one could foresee the outcome of this reform project; it would depend on the capacity of the schools to translate these ideas into practice, and of the Department to support them. The initial response surprised even the most ardent supporters of reform. To many observers it seemed like a wild rush into uncharted territory, too readily abandoning the wisdom of long-established practice.[25] For others the experimentation did not go far enough and was too readily abandoned when difficulties arose. The reservations expressed in the 1968 discussions were well-founded, and inadequate resources, inappropriate teacher preparation and administrative policies all plagued school reforms. But some schools persisted, despite the difficulties. One such school was Ferntree Gully High School, one of the two CAB pilot schools, which began as a new school in February 1968 with Year 7 students only. Taking the CAB reports and principles as a starting point, the school developed a new approach to the secondary curriculum. Establishing the preconditions suggested by the CAB, it introduced an organization which allowed teachers and students to work in close co-operation, then worked out a curriculum appropriate to the new structure. The experience of this school during the decade 1968 to 1978 provides an example, one of several among Victorian high and technical schools, of how principles and practice can be interwoven to provide a satisfying education for all students at the secondary level.

Ferntree Gully was a rapidly developing suburb at the foot of the Dandenongs. Thanks to co-operation between Reed and the Department's Educational Facilities Research Laboratory, its new high school was to have a new building in keeping with the intentions of the new curriculum. The new design, with classrooms located around a central courtyard, was significantly different from its corridor-style predecessor. The *Age* newspaper described the school as follows:

> At first sight the Ferntree Gully High School looks more like a luxury motel than a school. It sprawls in a hollow beneath the Dandenongs—a low-slung cluster of biscuit-coloured brick buildings. The walls are

> broken only by an occasional orange door and long french windows opening on the wide verandahs. Inside there is none of the sterile drabness of older schools. The children work in bright attractive rooms furnished in 'natural' colours — gold carpets, floor-to-ceiling curtains, dull green walls and dark, natural woodwork.'

But this was in 1971, the fourth year of the school's operations. For six months the school existed in the classrooms of a high school several miles away, then for two and a half years in the gymnasium on the site, surrounded by site works, and so overcrowded that in 1970 one class was required to stay away from school each week. Even in 1971, when the building was finally occupied, it was too small, and two portable classrooms were added. Site-works were not complete until 1978, ten years after the school opened.

For a few years the school was allowed to advertise itself as experimental, thus attracting applications from teachers wanting to teach the new curriculum; but then there was a reversion to the usual staffing procedures and teachers were posted according to seniority, regardless of their suitability for the new experiment. In addition, existing staff seeking promotion usually had to transfer to other schools, so that staff turnover rate of approximately one-third each year, while typical of Departmental schools, made the task of producing a coherent experimental curriculum very difficult. Further, the school was obliged not only to train teachers to work in an unfamiliar classroom context, but also to develop and evaluate appropriate curriculum materials. Proposals for sharing experiences between experimenting schools met with little response from central administration, and, almost inevitably, the distance between these schools and the administration widened. What the Education Department was prepared to do in the name of curriculum reform fell far short of the expectations of Reed and the CAB.

Despite these difficulties a new curriculum was introduced at Ferntree Gully High School at the Year 7 level, and then extended each year as the school grew to cover all six years. The new curriculum was a trial one, agreed to by the school's first teachers when they arrived at the school, one day ahead of their students. They decided to group students so that one teacher worked with one group of students for most of the time. This adaptation of the primary school classroom was intended to ease the transition of students from primary to secondary school, giving school and students time to get to know each other's requirements before the specialization of later years began. It provided the kind of interactive environment in which teachers could integrate pastoral care concerns with teaching, and learn the special needs and requirements of individual students on which curriculum planning would be based. The curriculum itself was planned by staff working as a team, combining subject areas and skills around unifying themes or topics. This initial implementation of the CAB's suggestions was endorsed by the staff at the end of the first year. They wrote that the interactive home room and the integrated curriculum 'used to the full the skills and enthusiasm of staff as individuals, produced the best teacher-pupil relationship . . . observation of pupils and adaptation of the program to meet their needs'.[27] Over the next few years this teacher-learner context, established initially in the Year 7 home room, became a key element in the curriculum and school organization.

Building on the experience gained in the interactive home room, an organizational structure was developed which provided a team of teachers to work with all the students at each year-level in semi-autonomous year-level units. Here staff worked with students in home rooms, one teacher with a home room class of 22 to 24 students for up to 18 hours each week. The co-operative environment envisaged by the Psychology and Guidance Branch and the CAB allowed teachers to work with individual students, with small groups and with the whole class, and to develop a curriculum which was informed by the teachers' detailed knowledge of the students. The primary responsibility for curriculum development lay with the year-level teams, who used a thematic structure in core areas, supplemented by optional and elective units in areas of special needs and interests. This provided what Tyler has referred to as 'horizontal' co-ordination of the curriculum.[28] 'Vertical' co-ordination, from Years 7 to 12, was provided by subject staff working in faculty teams, and overall policy and co-ordination were established by the whole staff meeting in weekly staff meetings and annual curriculum review conferences. Two further developments were made possible by this organization. The continuing involvement of staff in curriculum development created an incentive for continuing staff development, and the active participation of staff in developing the school organization which complemented the curriculum organization led to their assumption of administrative direction of the school through a staff executive, the Co-ordinators' Committee. This Committee consisted of team and subject co-ordinators, the Principal and Deputy-Principal.

The division by the CAB Steering Committee of its recommendations into two areas--the establishment of preconditions of learning, and the development of an intellectually-oriented curriculum for all students--had been deliberate. The intention was to affirm the essential but subordinate nature of the school's supportive and pastoral tasks and their relationship to its primary tasks. But this dichotomy was easier to write about than to implement, and was not clear to many involved in implementing the recommendations. This was true at Ferntree Gully as elsewhere. The interactive home room provided a context in which teachers came to know their students more fully than is usual at the secondary level, and the integration of pastoral and teaching functions caused considerable confusion. The home room allowed a view of each student as a whole person, 'a unique individual',[29] not simply as a student of a particular subject. But it also brought teachers face to face with the complexities and difficulties of their students' lives. For some teachers, 'making kids happy' became a goal in itself; others feared that challenging their students would endanger the good relationships which seemed so important a part of school policy. But slowly, through continuing discussions amongst the staff about the curriculum, the purpose of secondary education, the CAB's and Reed's principles and their own school policy, the function of close student-teacher interaction came to be articulated as an essential pedagogical tool enabling teachers to tailor their responses to individual students. As one teacher put it:

> Unless you have this knowledge in your head, you can't use it on the spur of the moment. So much teaching is a thing of the moment. You have to have a working knowledge of the kids, what Barnes calls 'action knowledge'.[30]

The loosely structured time in the home room allowed teachers considerable flexibility in arranging for students to work in clusters, in pairs or on their own, on a wide variety of classroom activities. Students were encouraged to work together, to ask each other for help and to move around the classroom and, to some extent, the school, in the course of their work. Their ability to work without continual direction was essential, in that it allowed teachers to select and organize small groups for intensive instruction:

> Sometimes I take intensive skills lessons that way. I'll choose the students I want to work with on something. Or I'll say, I'm going to work on such-and-such for a while, who would like to join me? The groups are almost never the same. They usually last one or two sessions.[31]

These short-term groups were selected to meet a variety of needs:

> Some of the students are not up to class discussions, they haven't developed the formal skills. So sometimes I take some advanced kids and bring in one or two others, into a group of good listeners. Some students are ready to respond at a deeper level to poetry than others. The latter spoil it in the whole class. So I take a small group off. There's a degree of sensitivity that isn't possible in the larger group.[32]

This sensitivity became apparent in the teachers' responses to their students too: 'I know these students so well now. I know when to challenge them, get them to look again at something they've said. And I know when to wait'.[13] Waiting, allowing students to undertake their own learning, became a part of the teachers' repertoire of teaching styles:

> After an introductory activity, what you then have to do is to stand back, wait. The students begin to offer comments. They seem to have missed the point, to be so off-beam. Then it's hard to stand back. The discussion sinks to rock-bottom. Then gradually one student begins to make sense of it, then another, then suddenly they're putting it all together for themselves . . . It requires self-confidence and confidence in the group. It requires openness between the staff and between staff and students. Pastoral care is not an extra in this school. It is a relationship between teachers and students throughout the school.[14]

The integration of counselling and advisory functions with those of teaching in the home rooms and year-level units helped teachers, too, to become aware of changes in students related to adolescent development, and the implications of these changes for the secondary curriculum. During the post-primary years students move from a family-centred world-view to an increasing awareness of themselves in relation to their peers and of their own separate identities. For some this is a difficult transition and can cause considerable difficulty for teachers. At Ferntree Gully teachers came to see this transition as a normal feature of junior high school years, to work with it rather than against it: 'We find most of them, at the end of Year 8 and for most of Year 9, going through this. They change. Then by the end of Year 9 most of them are ready to settle down'.[15] Students see themselves increasingly in a wider society, and begin 'thinking about jobs, . . . finding out what's necessary to get into particular jobs'.[16]

In 1971 the school introduced a work-experience programme for middle-school students, not just for those planning to leave school early but as an experience designed to help all students make appropriate educational and vocational decisions. During the senior years the transition from school to work became more central and the school encouraged careful exploration of vocations, prerequisites and alternative paths into them. Job-hunting for some students could be an important preoccupation during the final years, and this too was encouraged:

> If a student comes in . . . and says she has a job, we make a fuss of her, even if it means she'll leave school early. We're coming to see this as a transition period, not 'you're in school till December then you look for a job'.[17]

These transitions, from childhood to adolescence, from family to peer group, from school to work, were all seen as part of the curriculum context of post-primary schools, part of the content of classroom discussion and projects, and of curriculum planning. Consultation and decision-making, independence and responsibility were integral parts of the curriculum, along with literature and language, social studies, science and maths. The school was aiming at producing long-term behavioural effects rather than a display of acquired knowledge. Yet knowledge and learning remained the primary educational tasks of the school and the focus of the curriculum, despite the attention paid to pastoral and advisory functions. 'The school program is centred in the pupil as learner . . . The general emphasis is directed to the learning of study skills and attitudes'.[illegible] The integration of pastoral and teaching functions, the attention to individual students' needs and interests, and the integrated 'topic studies' curriculum were seen as means towards these ends. The difficulties were immense, for the staff were trained as subject specialists, had little experience in curriculum development and insufficient published material on which to draw. But they slowly developed an approach to integrated topics and individualized activities.

Integrated themes or topics replaced the traditional, year-long courses in separate subject areas. The shorter time-span spent on topics– usually from six to eight weeks– allowed for much greater flexibility in the introduction of new material. One such topic which proved popular among Year 7 students was 'Pioneers and Problems'. This topic aimed at introducing students to the experiences of early white settlers in Australia, and included history, geography, literature and creative writing and considerable art and craft work. The introductory activity placed students in imagination in a piece of unknown territory with nothing but a knife, a pocket book, a pencil, a series of maps and their own resourcefulness:

> They are obliged to explore the territory, from mangrove swamp to grasslands, from pine forests to mountains and desert. Map interpretation, knowledge of contours, group and individual research, lead the 'explorers' to a situation where they are able to select a suitable site to settle down, build a model house appropriate to their chosen area, plan suitable crops and graze animals which will flourish there. Having 'settled', the students then are able to take up pioneering activities– pottery, folk songs, ballads and other imaginative writing, related literature, weaving.[illegible]

The core, taken by all students, and the options from which they selected, were varied from year to year within this framework, depending on the abilities and interests of both students and teachers:

> These children are very concrete. They've been very willing to work at making things. In 'Pioneers and Problems' we were working on contours and land shapes. They made a model of the land they were settling, to scale. They made this of wire, cardboard, papier-mâché, painted the land, rivers, mountain tops, put in trees. From this some of them went

> on to very advanced work on contours. They did an assignment prepared for a Year 11 class. They did a lot of concrete things in that project: breadmaking, soapmaking, some did vegetable gardening in a plot out the back, weaving, leatherwork, bookbinding – they bound the journals they had to write of their journeys through the land – spindle-weaving, dyeing using Australian flora, patchwork.[10]

In addition to topic studies, interest areas such as music, drama, photography, a strong art and craft programme, and science, maths and foreign languages were offered as required or elective areas within the year-level curriculum. Home room teachers were responsible for ensuring the development of basic skill areas, which at Ferntree Gully included not just the '3 Rs', but also 'research skills, notetaking, map and diagram work, documenting opinions with and drawing conclusions from evidence'.[11] The definition of the school's educational aims was the subject of many curriculum conferences and policy statements, especially in the first few years. While the task was complex at the school level, as it had been for the CAB's Steering Committee, it served to ensure a continuing focus on educational aims. These discussions, too, enabled staff to work through to an understanding similar to that realized earlier by CAB members, that while the objectives of different subjects might differ in some specifics, there were underlying objectives which were the same regardless of subject area. These included:

> cognitive skills, including research skills and reading; ability to express oneself orally and in writing; imagination and confidence in one's own approach; independence of thought and presentation; ability to plan own work and work with others.[12]

Emphasis on the relevance of the curriculum to the students' lives was a major consideration in curriculum planning. Teachers were aware of a gulf between 'school knowledge' and students' out-of-school lives: 'There is a gap between school learning, which is seen as an academic exercise, and their real lives. Our job is to try to bridge that gap, to bring them together'.[13] A Year 12 media studies class provided an example:

> We had a really good discussion . . . on the role of the media . . . on the need to be critically aware of what you were watching and reading. At the end of the class one student turned to another. 'Did you see so-and-so on TV last night?' Then they were away as though we'd never had the discussion.[14]

As a means of overcoming this gap, students were encouraged to take non-school events, including television programmes, as the starting-point of classroom discussions and of independent inquiries of their own. The school also sought to include parents in an understanding of both the school's goals and their own role in their children's education. A mathematics teacher wrote to parents:

> At school we are somewhat restricted by a 'school' environment, and we cannot readily provide meaningful situations that often occur at home. We are sure that whilst many parents say they feel inadequate in assisting their children with Maths, they do not realize that they can play an important part in their child's development. Textbooks go to great trouble to provide 'real life' exercises, but it is at home that most of these situations occur.'[9]

Students were encouraged to be aware of developments in their community and state, of national and international events, and of the need to see themselves as having an active role to play. The school 'adopted' a Balinese child, for example, through an international foster-child agency, and students planned and carried out fund-raising activities for this and other people and groups, both local and international.

Learning for life, not for examination results, was a firmly held premise at the school, and with it went a commitment to lifelong learning and to helping students manage their own learning. This was pointed out explicitly to students:

> Learning goes on all through your life. It starts when you are very young and can go on until you die. But no-one can do it for you. During your school years society provides children with some fairly definite help with their learning: teachers, resources, special buildings. But the responsibility for learning is still yours.[10]

Students were taught to carry out their own curriculum projects and were often included in the planning of year-level topics. This made teachers aware of students' interests and background knowledge. The students were also involved in self-evaluation, especially in individualized study activities which were provided in the home room, but increasingly in other curriculum activities too.

By the time students reached Year 12 they were expected to carry a large share of responsibility for planning and evaluating their own learning. A Year 12 co-ordinator explained the process used to help them do so:

> You have to have a set of goals which you're trying to achieve, against which to assess what you're doing. So first we discuss in the group and with each student what these are. Then you have to make a plan of how you're going to work towards these aims, and again these are discussed in the group and individually. Twice each term the students write an assessment of what they have done. Beside this the teachers add their comments. During the year a record is accumulated of the student's progress and achievements, the work carried out and the skills developed.[11]

This approach to the Year 12 curriculum, however, was not implemented as long as the Higher School Certificate remained the only acceptable certification of school achievement. The 'narrow restrictions of the HSC course, designed solely for that small minority of students seeking university entrance',[18] was frustrating to the school's staff, and at odds with the individualized and integrated curriculum of Years 7 to 11: 'There's no control over the course, or assessment of how kids will handle the course-work. For the students there's no real involvement . . . Their experiences are compartmentalized, fragmented'.[19]

By 1975 twenty students took an alternative Year 12 course offered by the school for the first time for students whose immediate plans did not include university. To protect the interests of those students who might later opt for a career requiring tertiary training, the staff decided to approach tertiary institutions individually, to negotiate entry to courses on the basis of work done by the students in their final year at school. As a result of enormous effort on the part of the school staff, in co-operation with staff at a small group of schools similarly oriented, the school-based alternative to the HSC, a Schools Tertiary Certificate, was recognized by a number of tertiary institutions and employers.

In planning an alternative to the HSC, the school became more aware of what developments could be expected of students through an integrated curriculum, and was able to plan a coherent curriculum which worked towards these ends—subject teachers become clearer, too, about their functions within the year-level teams, seeing both their specialist contribution in their subject area, as well as their more general teaching function. Increasingly, they began to take on a staff development role to supplement team curriculum development. A science or art member of a year-level team, for example, prepared curriculum units as part of year-level topics, and would then run a workshop for fellow team members to help them with the instruction of these units in their home rooms. Library staff as well as subject co-ordinators organized curriculum workshops on developments in resources and approaches in their respective areas. In this way the school was able to provide both a rigorous and up-to-date curriculum in subject areas and a personal and supportive teaching-learning environment, thus resolving an old dilemma in post-primary education.

Each year-level team offered a full range of conventional and new subjects as the ingredients of a common course for all students, in addition to providing opportunities for special interests and individual needs. Curriculum development was a continuing process, for which time was allowed within the weekly schedule. The content taught at the school was not substantially different from that of other high schools, for as the CAB had perceived, this was not the real problem. By providing an environment in which student-teacher and student-student interactions were essentially co-operative, and one which allowed information of a broad nature to be shared, while at the same time retaining a focus on the intellectual goals of education, the school was building a secondary school organization which would allow the fuller achievement of these goals by all students.

Co-operation, open communication, the encouragement of inquiry and of personal responsibility were characteristic of the whole school. Major credit for establishing this climate must go to Howard Hopkins, who was school principal from 1968 to 1977 and also a member of the CAB. From the outset Hopkins held firmly to the principle of full staff involvement in all policy decisions and gradually delegated considerable administrative responsibility to the school's teachers. He repeatedly affirmed the professional and collaborative nature of his staff, believing that 'only when staff have the professional freedom permitted and encouraged by this . . . can we be said to have a professional relationship with each other as teachers and with our clients, the children'.[illegible] Increasing administrative responsibility was given to year-level teams and to the Co-ordinators' Committee, established in 1974 (see p. 85). Co-ordinators defined their role as one of organizing co-operation amongst team members, rather than one of directing subordinates:

> The greatest danger to our team organization as I see it is for a co-ordinator to assume a position of greater power than the rest of the team. I see the co-ordinator as centralizing communications, but not directing the policies or activities of the team. The co-ordinator must realize that the job is one of mastering the immense complexities of group dynamics. I've found that direct delegation of duties rarely works. What succeeds is when staff members initiate an idea and see themselves as being creative in the enactment of it.[illegible]

The task of team co-ordinators was, above all, 'to provide leadership for the year-level team, to encourage co-operation and consensus attitudes to planning and decision-making in the team'.[illegible]

By the late 1970s staff participation in administrative decisions was an even more controversial issue in Victorian high schools than the nature of the curriculum, yet, when Hopkins retired from Ferntree Gully High School in 1977, the administrative function of the Co-ordinators' Committee had been seen for some years as an essential corollary of school-based curriculum development. Perhaps the most important feature of the school was the capacity of the staff to model behaviours they expected of their students. Their ability to keep questioning themselves, challenging their own assumptions and habits, and learning from their own experience, and their willingness to assume responsibility for decisions affecting the curriculum and administration of the school were important parts of the education provided by the school.

The work of the Curriculum Advisory Board and of Ferntree Gully High School have been used here in part to illustrate the complexities of change in time-honoured institutions and practices. The reforms were initiated at the highest levels in both Secondary and Technical Divisions of the Department of Education, during a moment in history which favoured far-reaching reforms in many social areas. The problems in post-primary education discussed by the CAB, and later by its counterpart in the Technical Division, the Curriculum Standing Committee (CSC),[11] sparked off a tidal wave of potential solutions in the late 1960s. The General Studies movement, exemplified in the integrated studies curriculum of Ferntree Gully High School, represented the first wave of reform, sweeping aside many of the rigidities of the traditional curriculum. But the first wave of enthusiasm was soon over, leaving in its wake a trail of failures and considerable reaction. The relationship between the experimental schools and the central administration of the Education Department had always been fragile, partly because these schools, by their very nature, made special demands which were not always easy to satisfy. By the mid-1970s these schools felt isolated and lacking in support, while the pendulum swung in favour of other solutions to the problems of secondary education. In a few schools, such as Ferntree Gully, Moreland and Thomastown High Schools, Huntingdale Technical School, and Swinburne and Sydney Road Community Schools, the reforms were maintained and development continued. In the mid-1970s these schools inspired a second, smaller wave of reforms with the advent of mini-schools, whose administrative structure and rationale resembled that of Ferntree Gully.

Long before the experimental schools had reached a point of stability, however, the period of radical reform had passed. Made nervous by the early failures of the reformers, educational administrators sought a different set of guiding principles from those advanced by the CAB and the CSC. The late 1970s saw a swing away from school-based curriculum, and a return to centralized curriculum development, with behavioural objectives and standardized diagnostic and achievement tests.

Despite a general trend away from the reform principles of the late 1960s, however, the effect of those principles is still being felt in some areas. Perhaps the most important, in the long run, are the slow but perceptible changes in teacher education. Influenced by principles similar to those of the CAB, some secondary teacher education programmes at the three universities introduced smaller units and programmes in which student teachers could be helped to develop the wide range of personal and professional skills required by the new curriculum. While the first such programme was introduced at La Trobe, the one most closely associated with the work of the CAB was the school-based programme initiated at the University of Melbourne by Gwyneth Dow. Here a small group of student-teachers work in schools for two days a week throughout their year of training under the joint supervision of school teachers and university staff, working in close co-operation. The course aims to develop in its students not only a wide range of teaching and curriculum skills, but the personal growth and self-confidence necessary to assume the responsibilities inherent in teaching at schools like Ferntree Gully.[14]

Such changes in teacher training, however, have affected only a small proportion of newly-trained secondary school teachers. Similarly, the CAB reforms have developed fully in only a small number of high schools. The major thrust in curriculum development in recent years has been in the behavioural objectives approach to curriculum and evaluation. At Ferntree Gully, by contrast, a focus on long-term goals has been maintained, while staff, in collaboration with students, continue the practice of participatory policy-making and curriculum development. There has been a continuing commitment to the principle of co-operation, a principle so strongly espoused by the CAB when the school was in its infancy.

In the work of the CAB, co-operation was both an ethical and a functional principle. Functionally it provided the two-way exchange of knowledge on which a responsive and informed curriculum relevant to students' lives could be developed and implemented. Ethically it provided an important element in the education of future members of society; an experience in working together as members of social groups. There are many educators who do not agree with this approach, arguing that competition is a central principle in our social and economic system, and that it provides a necessary spur to achievement. The fact remains, however, that in a competitive system such as currently obtains in Victorian education, large numbers of students are doomed to failure, and a system which presumes the failure of many children cannot be said to meet the needs of all students.

The blueprint for curriculum reform advanced by the CAB in 1968 and followed by the Secondary Division of the Victorian Education Department for more than a decade did try to meet the needs of all students. Despite the many difficulties encountered in its implementation, it espoused principles of reform which are well worth reconsidering.

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3

After bureaucracy, what?: An Australian case study

Alan Rice

In Australia, bureaucratic authority in education has been in retreat since the mid-1960s. Control of the curriculum passed from administrators to teachers, without a corresponding increase in parent or community power. But the result is not anarchy. A case study of Victorian high school teachers, conducted between 1977 and 1979, reveals that teachers continue to produce socially and politically conservative curricula independently of formal administrative intervention or parental direction. This continuity in classroom practice is not due to a time lag, nor need it be explained as an outcome of earlier socialization. Rather, the ideological conservatism of teachers, their limited resources, the social resolution of the tensions between the pursuit of academic and student failure, and a pattern of interlocking but exclusive social networks continue to set limits to curriculum decision-making. In Victoria bureaucracy has given way to hegemony.

In heavy weather wise captains assess their vessels' seaworthiness and reset their sails. For the captains of western democracies, the news is not good (Crozier et al., 1975; Habermas, 1973; Kristol, 1978; Sklar, 1980). Liberal states rigged for fair weather are foundering on the rocks of continuing stagflation. The diagnosis: There is too much regulation in the private

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sector and not enough control in the public. The solution: Unshackle market forces; re-establish bureaucratic control of public institutions. Only then will we have sufficient drive and coordination to handle the dangerous challenges ahead. Indeed, it is feared that the decline in bureaucratic coordination has rendered schools incapable of providing the larger society with ideologically committed citizens and appropriately placed economic actors. Without bureaucrats, who shall guard the guardians? Who shall save youth from the corrupting influence of the teachers' curriculum?

These fears about schools are groundless. The analysis is specious because it assumes that the 1960s reforms to public schooling resulted in any meaningful loss of control. In Victoria, Australia, curriculum control shifted from bureaucrats to teachers, without ideological consequence. The social mechanisms changed, but not the pattern of constraints. These observations have wider implications. Institutional reforms do not necessarily indicate either the reformulation of a hegemony or the emergence of a counterhegemony. The state is not endangered by a nonbureaucratically coordinated curriculum.

THE DECLINE IN BUREAUCRATIC CONTROL

Mass secondary education emerged in Victoria only after World War II. Before then, secondary schooling provided an academic preparation for a homogeneous minority with professional aspirations. This narrow conception of schooling did not, however, meet the needs of a heterogeneous, postwar student enrollment. Schooling, it was urged, should now serve working-class and ethnic interests. This call for a flexible curriculum sensitive to class and ethnic differences struck a responsive chord with Ronald Reed, then head of the secondary division (Reed, 1975). By 1972 all centrally prescribed and examined courses below year 12 had been abolished. At the same time, the Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association (VSTA) succeeded in barring government inspectors from the classroom.

A majority of teachers in the VSTA argued, however, that the reforms were incomplete. The existence of centrally prescribed, externally examined year 12 courses forced teachers into an academic framework. Year 11 was preparatory to year 12, year 10 to year 11 . . . all of which set up a vicious chain of constraint. In 1970 the annual general meeting of the VSTA asked teachers of year 12 students to boycott the externally examined courses. As far as the teachers were concerned, tertiary institutions, the public service, and private employers could devise their own methods of recruitment.

The government acted to defuse the issue by holding a series of public enquiries between 1972 and 1976. The final recommendations, subsequently government policy, established the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education (VISE). In 1980 it was possible for the public, in partnership with VISE, to write year 12 courses. The following year between 30% and 50% of year 12 student assessment rested with their classroom teachers.

The eclipse of the bureaucrat did not, however, substantially increase the formal power of parents. School councils, restructured in the mid-1970s, can only make suggestions on curriculum matters. Without the power to monitor the school curriculum and to then hire and fire teachers, school councils remain weak levers for community interests. Power had shifted from administrators to teachers.

PROBLEMS OF INTERPRETATION

In Victoria contending political forces agree that the curriculum is now controlled at the school level. They divide in their assessment of the impact these changes have for the school system in particular and for society in general. In their submission to the Ministers of Education, the Consultative Committee (1980) took the view that the statewide administration of the curriculum is effective; that schools now serve legitimate local interests within a pluralist society. Unfortunately, these optimistic claims still await empirical validation.

On the other hand, those seeking a return to bureaucratic coordination argue that schools no longer serve the collective needs of society (Ministers of Education, 1980). Their presumption that a state of anarchy prevails also awaits validation. While social order can be underwritten by bureaucratic means, the Leviathan need not be a bureaucrat; the absence of such an animal is no guarantee of Hobbes's state of nature.

Whether schools are deviant, pluralist, subversive, or anarchic depends, in the final analysis, on how teachers select and present subject matter. On this point scholars are equally divided, though the dilemma is not uniquely Australian. Musgrove and Marland report that British curriculum coordination has passed from administrators to subject specialists without significant dislocation (Musgrove, 1972). For Kogan (1979), however, the British system is ungovernable. The traditional alliance between administrators and teachers now competes with local community-based alliances, resulting in a dual management system with a limited capacity for conflict resolution. Australian interpretations are no less contradictory. Bartlett and Ogilvie (1980), working within the Musgrove tradition, find that Queensland faithfully reflects the British experience. The principal's ability to manage the curriculum is diminished because of the postwar knowledge explosion. No one person can hope to master the breadth and complexity of modern scholarship. Curriculum coordination is now shared by professionally trained subject specialists. The Queensland curriculum is then neither subversive nor deviant. On this Smith and Knight (1981) agree, but for different reasons. Queensland schools are kept on the straight and narrow through the cabinet's direct intervention in curriculum matters. MACOS is banned not because of a consensus among subject specialists but by the political machinations of the legislature.

Whatever the situation in Queensland, it remains possible that there is enough regional variation to undo national interpretations. Young (1980), for example, believes that teachers are prisoners of their subject matter because of their comparatively impotent position in the decision-making structure, their vulnerability to bureaucratic intervention, and the presence of externally prescribed courses. However, if Victorian teachers are subject specialists, it cannot be for these reasons. Musgrave (1980), on the other hand, discounts the importance of hierarchical coordination. The curriculum is fashioned by deviant teachers acting within a hierarchical context. But as Musgrave does not specify his sense of deviance, it is difficult to assess its social and political consequences. Pusey (1980) parts company with both Young and Musgrave. Greatly influenced by the French experience in general, and Crozier in particular, Pusey believes Australian school systems are disintegrating. Today there are no universally acceptable criteria for selecting curriculum. Demands for schools to perform more and more social services have undermined a cultural consensus on what constitutes the curriculum; progressive critiques have politicized the curriculum, thus blurring the boundary between legitimate authority and arbitrary power. To protect themselves from arbitrary and potentially unfavorable judgments, teachers insist on an increasing number of official regulations limiting both their own and senior administrators' scope for action. Bureaucrats, though formally accountable for the quality of education, are powerless to intervene in the classroom. The disabled institution of public education is incapable of creative adaptation to social change and, with the next crisis, is destined for disintegration.

To summarize, Australian school systems are

(1) bureaucratically controlled, manageable, and socially and politically conservative; or
(2) on the edge of organizational dislocation; or
(3) in the hands of local interests, which may be either subversive or consensus building, depending on whether Australian society is pluralist; or
(4) in the hands of professional subject specialists – a fact that has conservative social and political implications.

This study establishes the pattern of curriculum coordination in the State of Victoria.

METHODOLOGY

Between 1977 and 1979 I conducted four studies designed to answer the question: What are the constraints on teacher curriculum decision-making?

In the first study I surveyed a random sample (n = 127) of high school humanities and science teachers in the Knox Region. The questionnaire uses Osgood's semantic differential technique (Osgood et al., 1957). The study found that teachers rely mostly on other teachers for curriculum support and that they are open to suggestions from subject associations and curriculum consultants but are closed to administrative direction. Teachers perceive sources of curriculum along three factors: evaluation, novelty, and dynamism. These findings, however, are less interesting than are the methodological implications.

The semantic differential's power rests in its ability to gather, economically, data suitable for estimating population parameters. But there are costs. Semantic differentials grossly simplify language, sometimes to the point of obscurity. The evaluation factor, for example, is defined by the following bipolar adjectives:

credible ... not credible
acceptable ... not acceptable
practical ... impractical
good ... bad
reputable ... disreputable
useful ... useless

In the newspeak language of the evaluation factor, meaning is significantly obscured. Does "practical," for example, mean that it works for a teacher in the classroom; that the curriculum recommendation is acceptable to a teacher's peers, or that it is politically expedient in some unspecified sense? The semantic differential is ill-fashioned to chart these areas of constraint and freedom.

The three subsequent studies are based on Merton's focused interview, a technique designed to capture actors' definitions of their situation (Merton et al., 1956). Each interview runs from forty to ninety minutes, is taped and subsequently transcribed. The teachers (n = 34) are drawn from junior science and humanities teachers in Knox, the rural Shires of Warragul and Buln Buln, and from three Melbourne inner-city community schools. But an actor's definition of a situation based on interviews alone does not provide enough information for determining general patterns of constraint. Actors may give honest interpretations but may nevertheless be ill-informed. To rely simply on interview data is to make a commitment to the plausible but perhaps superficial. Similarly, interviewees may use interviews as public relations exercises. The gap between reported and actual classroom behavior is only too well documented (Carlson, 1965; Fullan, 1972). The teacher interviews are supplemented by interviews with four curriculum consultants, three school-based careers teachers, and five educational psychologists servicing teachers and students in government schools. These interviews indicate the extent to which teacher perceptions are reinforced by encumbents in other roles and make it possible to establish the salient and peripheral features of curriculum decision-making.

To reduce the gap between reported and actual behavior, I have also drawn on informal observations of classroom practice based on eight years' contact with a wide range of schools. These observations – or, more correctly, impressions provided a benchmark from which to challenge teachers who either introduced surprising disclosures or merely wished to offer cover stories. Needless to say, my impressions of Victorian schooling underwent some changes as a consequence of the interviews. Finally, work in progress was subjected to the reaction of members of my politics of education classes, most of whom are teachers.

RADICALS, DEVIANTS, AND CONFORMISTS

Integrated studies was a popular cause twenty years ago. These courses promised to break the academic disciplines' monopoly of the curriculum. Teachers were asked to surrender their traditional role as transmitters of academic culture. Instead, they were invited to play an active role in creating contemporary, socially relevant knowledge. In partnership with their students, teachers would select salient problems for serious study. Students could then fashion their own understandings of such issues as pollution, conservation, and urban life.

Teaching could and should become, in the words of Postman and Weingartner (1969), a subversive activity.

It is useful to distinguish between controversial and subversive issues. What do the issues abortion, conservation, and nuclear power have in common? First, they are legitimate aspects of public discourse, the stuff of mass media coverage, government non-decision-making, and education department pronouncements. If these issues inflame public passions, it is not because they threaten the cohesion of the body politic, though such claims may be voiced in the heat of battle, but because their ultimate resolution impinges on sectional ideal or real interests. A government can be branded corrupt without impugning democratic virtue; a manufacturer can be charged with environmental violations without condemning capitalism; an administration may fall because of its handling of a controversial issue without weakening representative institutions. Issues become controversial only when the distribution of power across sectional groups is fluid. Issues remain controversial only while the balance of power remains unstable; hence the pyrrhic quality of so many political resolutions. Old battles are refought again and again.

Subversive issues, on the other hand, seldom enter the public domain. The mass media demand reforms to representative political institutions, not their replacement by democratic centralism; corporations are condemned for their incompetence without a discussion of the merits of nationalization. These alternatives arouse little public interest. Those who raise them are labeled communist, neurotic, or immature and are thus conveniently dismissed. Sectional interests are unlikely to frame their demands within a subversive ideology. The women's movement uses sexism as its fundamental organizing category; black Americans use racism. Subversive issues threaten the status quo precisely because they introduce competing constructions of reality which undermine the credibility of key political and economic institutions. These issues are always counterhegemonic, often unpopular, and, in Victoria, beyond the pale of public discourse.

Schools, then, can be forums for controversial issues, but teachers are seldom subversive. Case study interviews frequently illustrated this fact. Peter is justifiably proud of his unit, "Poverty in Australia." It raises the questions "Who is poor?" "Why are they poor?" What benefits do they receive?" After defining poverty, the course then identifies the poor as pensioners, aboriginals, immigrants, and those without jobs. But the unit draws no links between rich and poor people or how wealth is and is not accumulated. Peter could see no relevance in the comparison. "I know that's the Marxist way of seeing things but things don't work like that in Australia."

Graham teaches a similar unit at another high school. He is an active member of a socialist group, an unsolicited piece of information coming early in the interview. When asked to reconcile his private politics with his single-issue ahistorical interpretation, Graham replied,

> Yes it gets to me sometimes but what else can you do? This is as far as you can go. If you give a critique of capitalism the next thing you'd know there'd be a classroom of angry parents with Thompson (then Minister for Education) out for my blood.
>
> *Has this happened to you?*
>
> No, but you don't have to be a genius to know what'll happen. Even the parents who vote for the Labour Party are conservative. And what texts would I use? *Arena? The Australian Journal of Political Economy?* My kids couldn't understand *Arena*. And they're both "communist" anyhow. Politics is voting behavior, pressure groups and political parties. Like the HSC course. I don't have any options.

Arena and *The Australian Journal of Political Economy* are Marxist journals of a generally academic nature that, even in university circles, are of questionable merit because of their "ideological bias."

Most teachers are more like Peter than Graham. At a school where I was conducting interviews a group of teachers met in the staffroom to discuss a unit on democracy they planned to introduce the following week. Two had tried a fieldwork approach the year before. Their classes had joined forces in lobbying a local council on a much promised, but two years later still undelivered, pedestrian crossing. Their students measured pedestrian and road traffic, documented near accidents, petitioned parents, spoke with councilors, and attended council meetings, all to no avail. They returned to their class disillusioned. The teachers, disappointed with the result, decided to abandon the teaching method with no thought given to modifying the underlying theoretical assumptions.

Teachers distinguish between controversial and subversive issues. Few are prepared to risk parental or ministerial censure. A large percentage do use some of their classroom time for forums on controversial issues. Their approach is typically even-handed: It is politically expedient to adopt a value-free epistemology within a framework of liberal tolerance.

> You can't just push one side. That's indoctrination. I try to get my students to see more than one side of an issue. Debates are good for this. It's up to them to make up their own minds.

Consequently, teachers emerge not as a revolutionary vanguard but as cautious followers of larger social forces. Just how cautious depends on their estimates of the risks involved, an assessment much influenced by local considerations.

For most of their time, however, Victorian teachers are subject specialists. Lessons immediately prior to the interviews were usually science, English, and history, none of which were labels of convenience. Where schools own class texts, teachers are reluctant to purchase resource kits appropriate to an issue-centered, problem-solving course. Many are dissatisfied with existing material. Like Gary, they have no arguments with the academic soundness of most texts, but

> Teachers should write them, not ivory tower academics. We're in touch with student interests and know their reading levels. But who gives us the time? You know who's going to write them don't you?

Consequently teachers find themselves dependent on texts the conscientious are bound to modify.

> We did a smattering of chemistry from JSSP – compound and solution – but we don't use their cards. We made our own cards instead because a lot of the language was too difficult to understand.

Typically, Jill turns to other science teachers within her school for help in rewriting the JSSP cards. Barbara, head of an English department, does the same.

> Peter sits near me. Sometimes he asks, "What are you doing these days?" Or I say, "Look, I've made out a work sheet. Do you want it?" Shirley and Freda have the same thing going for themselves. There is a certain cross pollination of ideas .... When I need something I just have to ask.

The conservatives' worst fears are confirmed. Mary does little to alleviate their anxiety.

> In some schools teachers do exactly what they want, no syllabus even. It doesn't seem to be a very good idea because you have problems with the next year when not all kids have the same basic knowledge.

No doubt such schools exist: Mary had no experience of them; none was discovered in the four studies. Further probing with Barbara and Freda reveals that all in the English department are equally concerned with grammar, composition, précis, and literature. Mary does emphasize drama, Peter grammar, Freda and Shirley writing, but the variations occur within a shared understanding of what constitutes the subject. This variation is similar in kind to that found among teachers of bureaucratically administered courses. In both contexts teachers decide how much of a course they will cover and the depth of treatment given to topics.

To summarize: Subversive issues do not find their way into Victorian classrooms despite the lack of bureaucratic control. Most teachers see the world through liberal windows. Those who do not compartmentalize their private and teaching lives.

The lack of "respectable" materials reinforces the separation of work and politics. Fear of ministerial, departmental, or parental sanctions encourages nonliberals to pursue controversial issues within a liberal orthodoxy. Teachers minimize their risks by adopting a "pros and cons" approach without the benefit of interest analysis. Despite this, controversial issues are peripheral to the routine operation of the curriculum. By and large, teachers are transmitters of that academic culture enshrined in subject textbooks. Teachers are, in the main, conscientious transmitters of noncontroversial knowledge. They do not create knowledge. Had they more time, they would develop materials appropriate to students' interests and abilities. Such diversity is not deviant in any obvious sense. These Victorian teachers take the social order for granted, ignore the problematic relation between social structure and knowledge, and willingly accept their role as subject specialists. The question is, why?

BEYOND CONTROL NOT OUT OF CONTROL

A century of functional differentiation within schools has done little to alter the world of classroom teachers (see Crozier et al., 1975; Pusey, 1980). Today Victorian schools perform more services only by recruiting new specialists with little to offer the classroom teacher. "Oh yes, we've got a careers teacher. He runs the work experience program," adequately summarizes the impact of the government's youth employment initiatives. Only a handful of teachers modify their courses. "I spend more time on oral work these days . . . interview and telephone skills. My kids [year 10] will leave at the end of the year, some even earlier. They need all the help they can get." Most teachers, however, see no special role for themselves in the prevailing economic climate.

> The future's grim for the dropouts. Not like it was in the fifties and sixties. You feel sorry for them but all these transition

> programs and careers teachers don't do a thing. It's a bloody government con. Schools can't create jobs no matter what you do in your classroom.

Close collaboration with and acceptance by careers teachers offer few rewards for most teachers. Oddly enough, peer group acceptance based on a shared definition of the classroom situation is very important despite the fact that teachers invariably claim sovereign rights over teaching methods:

> I think different teachers can use different methods quite successfully. But I have the best relationship with my students if I can stand out in front and have a joke with them .... Even if I scream and rant and rave a bit, which is all an act, it get results, so that's the way for me. But then I see other teachers for whom it doesn't work. They don't like being out the front.

There is no doubt Sue, like so many teachers, believes teachers are free to teach as they please. The belief, however, is mistaken. Progressive teachers leave traditional schools because of frustration with and lack of support from their traditional peers. Progressive teachers, while within traditional schools, develop coping strategies that are only partly successful. The combination of public conformity and private resentment incurs its own costs. "I fit into the school all right. But I hated myself. I'd come home really angry about all the trivial rules I had to enforce. Thank God I got out." Open confrontation serves only to heighten isolation and alienation.

> It was terrible. We visited all of the kids' parents and explained what we wanted to do. They agreed. But when we got to the school. Oh brother. The coordinator said we usurped his authority. Other teachers sniped about how we didn't try to fit in. Trouble makers. We weren't trying to convert them. All we wanted was room to move too.

In community schools with teachers of similar educational beliefs, beliefs that shape the practical, these once alienated teachers now enjoy their colleagues' support. Consequently, while it is less so for progressive teachers, teachers generally expect to be judged and accepted, not on their contribution to youth employment but on the caliber of their exit students and their mastery of classroom control.

The need for peer group acceptance in any job requires no explanation. But aspects of teacher acceptance help to explain the modest success of curriculum consultants and educational psychologists in their attempts to change classroom practice. An excessively noisy classroom, frequent resort to punishment, and continual yelling at students are the hallmarks of poor classroom control. "I hate teaching next to some teachers. Their noisy classes upset my students." Or, as a progressive teacher put it, "I don't think Fred fits in here. He's a nice enough bloke. But he turns into a tyrant in the classroom. Always yelling. That's not what we're after."

Once control is established, teachers expect their peers to provide effective tuition within a subject. Those who consistently promote classes weak in a discipline make more work for the following year's teacher. Nevertheless, no matter how talented a teacher, some students fall below standard. For teachers, student failure is pervasive and potentially traumatizing. Support for the abolition of external courses is not, then, entirely altruistic. "Look, most of our students won't go to university. Why fail them on academic grounds? It's like kicking them while they're down." But not all teachers find themselves in working-class schools. Students in middle-class schools are informally but effectively streamed by their choice of subjects at years 10 and 11. These impersonal collective decisions reduce the frequency of teacher exposure to student failure while providing teachers of low achievers with sympathetic staff support.

> Oh God, I've got 3M next.
>
> You poor bastard. Good luck anyhow.

Teacher reactions to low-achieving classes, as distinct from streaming, differ but continue to reinforce the shared definition of the relation between student ability and school performance.

> I know and they know most of them will fail this year. My job's to teach them history and that's what I try to do. I'm no social worker.

This callous disregard of schooling's disabling consequences continues to color the stereotype of the authoritarian teacher. In fairness it needs to be said that authoritarian teachers deal in a perfectly understandable way with an unpleasant situation by opting for social distance. But in so doing these teachers strengthen the beliefs that many student failures are beyond teacher influence; that modifying subject matter is pointless.

> I enjoy teaching this class much more than the top group. All the top group know is schoolwork and if something's not on the course they don't want to know about it. But my kids are alive. Real personalities. They're already people.

For these teachers individual development is more important than academic success, which, for many of their students is unlikely.

> You don't like the idea that they're failing, but even if they are why should they be crippled by the experience? Success in life doesn't depend on schooling. Knowing how to play the system can be pretty important too.

The division of labor within and between schools provides these teachers with a personally rewarding sense of benefit to other teachers. Within schools, "humanist" teachers willingly take unpopular classes. Across the state some schools acquire humanist, others academic, reputations. This delicate balance between progressive and traditional schools, remedial classes and academic streams sets upper and lower limits to the diffusion of progressive practice. Progressive schools and remedial classes find niches in mass education systems only for as long as academic excellence is culturally meaningful, its achievement socially and culturally rewarding. Then the tensions between progressive and traditional teachers are not rooted in misunderstanding (King, 1974). Progressive teachers threaten their traditional counterparts through redefining the classroom context: Teachers largely determine student achievement by defining student ability. Critiques of traditional schooling therefore offer subject specialists little psychological comfort.

> Take the maths teacher I saw yesterday. Four of his year 9 students are giving him trouble. These kids don't have what you'd call social and emotional problems. They're weak in maths. This teacher pitches his material at the middle level. These kids can't handle it so they become bored and frustrated. He wants me to place these four students in a remedial program. Anyone would do as long as they're outside of his classroom. I'm trying to encourage him to teach to individual differences within his class.

Teacher networks seldom include educational psychologists or curriculum advisors. The omission is neither intentional nor accidental. Like progressive teachers, psychologists and consultants undermine teacher definitions of acceptable classroom practice. Psychologists question the link between student ability and school performance, thus reopening the issue of teacher culpability in a context where large numbers of students fail anyhow. Curriculum consultants who encourage the adoption of new teaching styles increase the risks individual teachers run of losing classroom control and thus peer group acceptance. Consequently, paraeducationalists do not control and are unable to intervene in the curriculum. At best their influence is modest.

DISCUSSION

The metaphor of the ship of state rests on a voluntaristic conception of social order. It assumes, somewhat simplistically,that power and control are synonymous and that individual action is patterned only by control agents (Lukes, 1977).

But as the Victorian case suggests, the absence of control agents in the voluntarist sense has not ushered in an age of mayhem. This is not, of course, to say that the shift from bureaucratic to teacher control of the curriculum is without consequence. The change, however, is from a system of close surveillance based on distrust to one where it is assumed workers have internalized appropriate values. Workers on Ford's assembly lines and in Volvo's assembly groups continue to produce cars. And so it is with Victorian teachers. For most, their world views sit comfortably within the overarching Australian hegemony. They are not deviant in any special sense; the question of subversion seldom arises.

The lack of disorder following the decline in bureaucratic control is not due to a time lag. The expectation of social dislocation is bound for disappointment precisely because voluntarist assumptions ignore the limitations imposed by ideology and interlocking social networks. No doubt earlier socialization processes contribute to conservatism, but ongoing social forces play their part too. Teachers en masse do not create controversial issues. Conflicting pressure groups with the support of government and mass media shape public discourse. Some teachers may use their classrooms as forums, but even here teacher action is characterized by cautious risk taking. Teachers rarely write curriculum materials. This is the preserve of academics and curriculum consultants. Though more research is needed, it seems likely that these materials are politically and socially safe. Teachers by and large have few quarrels with the substantive content of texts, but they are concerned to modify and thus tailor published materials to their students' requirements. Even if teachers wished to introduce idiosyncratic or subversive content, which they do not, there are no respectable alternative materials. Consequently, published materials reinforce locally based subject specialist networks. In this, teacher roles differ little from those of doctors, lawyers, and nurses.

Similarly, whether or not teachers approve of grading students, schools do not establish the cultural meanings of academic merit or distribute its social rewards. While there are relationships among education, occupation, status, and wealth, schools at most identify individuals for appropriate life stations. A mass education system without failure must await a division of labor freed from a status hierarchy and an unequal distribution of resources. In the meantime, Victorian teachers mediate student failure through locally based teacher networks and statewise subject associations. These networks set limits to teaching styles, the degree to which the quest for academic achievement may be modified, and the extent to which teachers may diverge from conventional understanding of a particular subject. These networks help to indicate accepted levels of the relationship between student ability and performance, thus reducing teacher anxieties surrounding student failure. Tensions between academic excellence and student failure within mass education systems create both the opportunity for and limitations of progressive and remedial forms of schooling. Paraeducationalists, like curriculum consultants and psychologists, are similarly limited in their influence because they, too, challenge aspects of the teachers' definitions of the situation without providing alternative support networks.

Victorian curriculum control is hegemonic, not bureaucratic or anarchic. It is a social order without a legitimate central authority (Gouldner, 1976). Senior administrators are unable to change subordinate behavior through direct intervention. But Victorian teachers are not unconstrained in their actions. Teacher practice qua practice does not conflict with administrators' expectations and continues to meet the needs of powerful social forces. The battle between teachers and administrators is not over the function of education in a modern Western society but who should run the schools. In Victoria, the change from bureaucratic authority to hegemonic coordination occurred without ideological transformation, institutional dislocation, or political disorder.

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4

Dangerous knowledge: A case study in the social control of knowledge

Ken Johnston

In 1974, a parent of a secondary school student in New South Wales complained in a letter to both the school and the Education Department that her child had been upset by what she regarded as an unsuitable lesson. An officer of the Department visited the school to look into the complaint and the teacher was subsequently suspended from duty. He was formally charged under Section 37 of the Teaching Services Act which covers punishments for breaches of discipline. A number of accusations were levelled at the teacher which alleged that he was guilty of both misconduct and disgraceful and improper conduct.[1] Seven weeks after the suspension, the hearing began. Although the suspension was lifted soon after, and the teacher returned to his position at the school, the hearing continued and it was not until some months later that a verdict was finally reached. The teacher was found guilty of 'serious errors of judgement', but the Department decided to drop the charges and not take action against him. He remained teaching at the school.

From the suspension to the final judgement, five months had elapsed. Over this period, teachers, parents, children, pressure groups and the mass media all reacted to the case. Conflicts and tensions, that are normally latent in education, suddenly became manifest. A teacher, who previously had no reason to doubt the propriety and legitimacy of his teaching, suddenly realised that to some parents, and the education authorities, his teaching was problematic and indeed dangerous. There are many aspects of the incident that are sociologically important but in this paper I wish to concentrate on the social control of knowledge. The first section offers a cultural analysis that seeks to explain why particular knowledge is thought to be dangerous and threatening. The second section describes the structural contradictions that gave rise to the conflict and the final section considers the case of censorship as a form of ideological control.

Dangerous Knowledge

Whenever individuals or groups classify knowledge as dangerous, there is an impulse to control and eliminate such teachings. Not all social actors, however, have the power to legitimise their definitions of dangerous knowledge and enforce censorship. In this analysis I am concerned with the definitions of the authorities because it is the officers within the Education Department who have the power to define knowledge as dangerous and illegitimate within schools. The charges against the teacher were supported by thirteen particular allegations which described the nature of the teacher's alleged deviancy.[2] Some of the allegations refer to curricula knowledge and others refer to the broader area of behavioural knowledge; I have ordered the allegations under these headings.[3]

1. Allegations that the content of teaching was open to censure.

It was formally alleged that the teacher—

(a) read to second-form pupils a story called 'Sing This at Your Old School Reunion', and asked the girl pupils to write a composition in which they were to imagine themselves 'taking the part' of the strip-tease artist who was sexually assaulted by drunken young men;

(b) allowed pupils in second-form to retain improper material in their exercise books and folders;

(c) emphasised unduly matters of violence, horror, sex and death in English and History lessons. The prosecution produced seven alleged instances of the over-emphasis of violence, horror and death. Five related to what were judged to be inappropriate stories and poems read to the class: a book entitled 'First Blood', a poem entitled 'Jan Palack', a poem entitled 'A Victorian Hangman Tells His Love', a book called 'Freaks, Fate and Fortune', and a book called 'The Exorcist'. The other two accusations in the violence, horror and death category referred to what were judged to be inappropriate exercises given the pupils: an exercise to describe what went on in the mind of a girl who committed suicide, and essays on such topics as, 'Assassin Murdered', 'Violence', 'Violent Happenings', 'The Gallows – A Sure Death', 'Execution', 'The Last Moments of My Life', and 'Hanged'. Several instances were cited by the prosecution to support their charge of an undue emphasis on sexual material. The teacher was supposed to have discussed the physical attributes desirable in the opposite sex during a history lesson. He was thought to have given a lesson on aboriginal birth customs that was inappropriate for a second-form class.

(d) gave sex lessons to pupils in the fourth-form without the permission of the Principal;

(e) allowed fourth-form pupils to perform absurd activities without the Principal's or Subject Master's approval. On this count, four instances were cited: the pupils were allowed to blow small heaps of sand with bellows; they were allowed to accost young children and demand to know why they were not wearing overcoats on a hot day; they were allowed to hang washing outside a butcher's shop; they were allowed to roll a peanut on the footpath with their noses.

2. Allegations that the behaviour and relationships of the teacher were open to censure.

It was alleged that the teacher –

(a) established improper relationships with students. On one hand, the teacher was accused of using improper and objectionable language; he was alleged to have said to a girl student, 'Belt up or you will get a kick up the bum'. On the other hand, he was accused of having over-friendly relationships with his students. On this count, there were many alleged incidents cited by the prosecution. They alleged that he stayed back after school with girl pupils; that he travelled with girl pupils in his car to conduct a seance; that he encouraged girl pupils to bring their personal problems to him; that he gave lifts to girl students to and from school; that he sat with girl students during recess; that he danced with girl pupils in a locked staff room; that he allowed pupils to use his Christian name; that he talked in an unprofessional manner to a girl student in the playground; that he sat on the backs of pupils' chairs in class and sat next to them and leant over them; and finally, that he courted a pupil, aged 16 years;

(b) disregarded directions of his superiors within the school. Two alleged instances of disobedience concerned the content of teaching. The teacher was accused of failing to refer each topic and piece of literature, each project and excursion to the subject master for prior approval. He was also accused of using material containing explicit references to sexual matters, which was against the written instructions of the Deputy Head. The remaining two instances of disobedience were administrative in nature. The prosecution alleged that he failed to carry out the English History policy regarding text-book issue sheets, and that he did not write up the class roll within the time set by the Principal.

Such were the charges laid against the teacher; dangerous knowledge included themes of sex, violence, horror, death, the supernatural, absurdity and over-familiarity with pupils. Why was this knowledge threatening to the authorities? I will argue that the threat arose because the teacher was seen as contravening tacit rules governing teachers' behaviour. First, at the level of content, he transmitted knowledge that was morally anomalous. Second, he adopted a pedagogy that stressed empathy with those caught up in moral conflict and a critical questioning approach to conventional moral categories.

For analytical purposes it is not enough simply to describe themes of sex, violence, horror, death, the super-natural and absurd as controversial or contentious, as this does not explain the threatening status of such knowledge. We must ask more fundamental questions about the cosmological status of dangerous knowlege. I will argue that the threat arose because individuals and groups perceived the themes as morally anomalous and, therefore, subject to control. Anomalous knowledge is that which confuses or contradicts conventional categories. Mary Douglas (1966; 1968; 1970) has taken particular account of moral anomaly; she has commented that cultures pay great attention to the symbolic demarcation and separation of the sacred from the profane, and she fastens upon the notion of dirt as the English-speaking cultures expression of the anomalous.

> For us, dirt is a kind of compendium category for all events which blur, smudge, contradict or otherwise confuse accepted classifications. The underlying feeling is that a system of values which is habitually expressed in a given arrangement of things has been violated (Douglas, 1968: 338).

Using this perspective, censorship of the heretical is an attempt to reject the anomalous and to reassert the 'rightness' of accepted moral categories. The usefulness of this approach will become clearer when we look at a few of the allegations in more detail.

One important set of classifications concerned the anomalous area of sexual relationships. A major charge against the teacher concerned a short story, entitled, 'Sing This at Your Old School Reunion', written by John Box (1966). There are two principal characters in the story, Malcolm and Susan, and the author establishes their social position with great skill and economy. We soon recognise Malcolm as belonging to the established middle-class: captain of the school class, and of the First Eighteen, Dux of the exclusive private school, top dog of the guest list, successful at university, skilled at rowing, engaged to Cynthia, who comes from a respected, rich family and who brings with her a partnership in the family firm as an engagement present. Susan, we discover, is from the struggling poor: an early leaver from school, in and out of unskilled jobs, takes up dancing in strip-tease clubs, going steady with Ian, a bouncer at the club.

The story describes the relationship between Malcolm and his friends and Susan, who has been hired to do her strip-tease dance at Malcolm's Bucks Party. By the end of the story our moral categories are savagely inverted. The stereotyped polarity of social class and sexual behaviour is as follows:

Bourgeois sexual relations: gentle: self-restrained: respectable

Working-class sexual relations: rough: violent: promiscuous: vulgar

At the Bucks Party, this polarity is inverted. Susan is set upon by Malcolm and his friends in a scene of drunken debauchery. Our categories are radically questioned:

Malcolm: rough, violent: promiscuous: vulgar

Susan: gentle: self-restrained: respectable

We are dealing here with dangerous knowledge, knowledge about anomalous sexual behaviour which contradicts the dominant moral code of bourgeois society. The knowledge was dangerous, not only because it was about strip-tease, passion and lust, but, most importantly, because it placed before young people contradictions and ambiguities in the system of moral classifications and class-based sexual stereotypes.

Another important set of threatened classifications revolved around conceptions of appropriate teacher-pupil relationships. Numerous allegations stated that the teacher was over-familiar with pupils. As with the earlier example, I will use the notion of polarities and equivalents to state the classification:

Appropriate teacher-pupil relationship: formal: distant: impersonal: public.

Inappropriate teacher-pupil relationship: informal: close: personal: private.

Once again, the anomaly arises with the inversion of the accepted classification. In adopting an informal, personal mode of relating to students, the teacher was at odds with the dominant positional basis of control and authority in the school. Although we lack Australian studies of the kind carried out by Lacey (1970) and Hargreaves (1967) in England, it is very likely that the same processes of differentiation occur, resulting in well-defined, anti-school cultures among the students. Teachers consequently confront students who possess their own relevance-structures and who resist the imposition of teacher-categories and knowledge. In this situation of implicit or open conflict, teachers who negotiate a form of personal, informal relationships with students, and who thereby share or show a genuine interest in student culture, are a threat to authorities and colleagues who maintain an impersonal social distance. Close, personal relationships within a structured, hierarchical system, may in fact lead students to question the legitimacy of hierarchy itself.

Within many of the allegations, including those we have analysed, are important classifications as to the groups that should be protected from dangerous knowledge. The groups I have in mind are the young and girls, and I can suggest the classification once again by setting out the polarities and equivalents:

Young person: pure/innocent: vulnerable: to be protected

Old person: impure/experienced: invulnerable: unprotected

Girls: pure/innocent: vulnerable: protected

Boys: impure/experienced: invulnerable: unprotected

Throughout the case, it became apparent that for the authorities, the knowledge was not in itself dangerous, but became so when it was made accessible to young people. When it was alleged, for example, that a lesson on Aboriginals was inappropriate for thirteen year old children, the implication was that such children were easily demoralised or disturbed by the knowledge and therefore needed to be protected for their own good. In my interview with the teacher, he described the particular lesson.

> It was about Aboriginals. Aboriginals in Arnhemland. They believe that spirit children were deposited by rainbows in the streams. It just came straight from Berndt. The women go out and squat in the pools and that's how they think they get pregnant. That was one thing. And the other one was that if she had a child, an Aboriginal woman, and the child dies at birth, she will eat a portion of it to retain the spirit of the child inside her so that she can have another child.

What evidence is there that children of thirteen years are vulnerable to such knowledge? In his final judgement on the case, the departmental officer conducting the hearing warned the teacher of the 'potentially disturbing psychosocial implications' of his teaching material, but at no point was there any attempt to define this imprecise term and demonstrate the damaging effects of dangerous knowledge on young people. Of course, such evidence is hard to come by, and it may well be that the anxiety was a more generalised one about moral standards or order.

The other vulnerable group is girls, and here we cannot disregard the sexist bias of the allegations. When we discussed the charges of overfamiliarity, the teacher said:

> You see, one of the charges was that I didn't sit next to pupils, but I sat next to girls. It was always that angle. Always that I sat next to girls. So when it came to the cross-examination my barrister always had to go through and 'Did he also sit next to boys?' 'Yes'. 'When did he sit next to girls? In some little corner?' It turned out to be in the playground at recess. 'You mean that there were other people around?' 'Yes'. 'How many people around at recess?' 'About 1,100!'

In part, we are dealing with the familiar double-standard. Knowledge about sexuality especially anomalous knowledge, is thought to be particularly dangerous to girls: they are in greater moral danger than boys, and, therefore, must be given a filtered version of reality to protect their purity and naivity. But apart from content, there is another double standard about relationships. While it might be acceptable for male teachers to establish personal, informal relations with boys, it is clearly not acceptable in the eyes of the authorities to establish the same relations with girls. The fear is obvious: informal, personal relationships will lead to sexual relationships. The allegations in the case study were not that the teacher had engaged in illicit sexual relations with girl pupils, but that he was over-familiar. But in what sense is 'over-familiarity', whatever that might mean, a crime in teaching? Its only significance is that it might lead to a crime; the charges depended upon imputation.

The threat to the dominant values not only arose from the content of the teaching and relationships, for the pedagogy also contravened taken-for-granted rules that normally govern teacher behaviour. When confronted with morally anomalous themes, school teachers tend either to ignore the fact that such realities exist, or to assume a liberal posture of neutrality in the face of contentious issues. Waller, writing of American schools earlier this century, accurately described the strategy of ignorance when he wrote that schools were 'museums of virtue' and teachers the 'moral custodians' of society (1932: 34). The implication is that teachers can transmit with authority a clear moral content, a relatively unambiguous moral universe that precludes moral anomalies from serious study. Teachers who adopt the second strategy, that of liberal neutrality, characteristically have no such confidence in the absoluteness of their moral universes and few would embrace the role of 'moral custodian'; a more appropriate description would be 'neutral and impartial chairman' (Stenhouse, 1969). The teacher as 'moral custodian' and the teacher as 'morally neutral chairman' are both seen by authorities as legitimate, because neither threatens the dominant systems of classification. To what extent, then, did the teacher in the case study depart from these responses?

Confronted by moral anomaly, the teacher insisted on appreciation rather than judgement. We can see how the relationship of appreciation and empathy figured in the charges. It was alleged that the teacher set the class exercises to describe what went on in the mind of a girl before she committed suicide. Another major charge was that, after reading the story called, 'Sing This at Your Old School Reunion', the girl pupils were asked to write a composition in which they were to imagine themselves 'taking the part' of the strip-tease artist who was sexually assaulted by drunken young men. Girls committing suicide, strippers, hangmen, freaks, assassins, criminals; they occupy the border lands of our society. To recognise their existence, in the classroom, and to adopt a strategy of appreciation and empathy means reducing the distance between normal and abnormal. By withholding judgements of irrationality, morality, sinfulness and so on in order to empathise with individuals entangled in conflicts, pupils can begin to understand the reasons why we customarily react so strongly to moral deviants. Such an approach is likely to be very threatening to those whose moral universe is inhabited by firm, unambiguous rules and rulers.

In this analysis of dangerous knowledge I have not analysed all the allegations against the teacher and have passed over many threatened classifications. Yet analysis of this sort is necessary if we desire to understand how teachers and authorities impose cosmological restraints on the knowledge they transmit in schools. My objective to this point has been to demonstrate that there is some knowledge which is regarded as dangerous, by some groups, if transmitted to particular categories of students, in particular ways, and in some contexts. I have tried to show that conflicting definitions of permissible knowledge etch out the areas of moral anomoly. It is through such conflict, as Leach points out, that the boundaries of our category system are redefined.

> Earth in the garden is just earth; it is normal matter in its normal place. Earth in the kitchen is dirt; it is a matter out of place. The more sharply we define boundaries, the more conscious we become if the dirt has ambiguously got into the wrong side of the frontier. Boundaries become dirty by definition and we devote a great deal of effort to keeping them clean, just so that we can preserve confidence in our category system (Leach, 1976: 61).

In the final section of this paper, which follows the next section, I will examine the theme of order and anomaly in category systems, not in terms of cosmology, but as a form of ideological control.

The Limits of Permissibility

I now wish to move from a cultural to a structural mode of analysis in order to examine the social determinants of dangerous knowledge. Can we identify the structures that set the limits of permissible knowledge? The different forms of structural constraint emerge when we describe the conflict in terms of teacher autonomy. In New South Wales in recent years teachers have been allowed a degree of control over their curricula. In the current English syllabus, emphasis is on encouraging the teacher to select knowledge relevant to the interests of pupils; principles and guidelines have replaced dogmatic prescriptions.

This move is in conflict with two opposing constraints. First, the autonomy is constrained by the nature of the hierarchical education bureaucracy within which teachers work. Authorities, both within the school and the Education Department, possess very firm, but implicit notions about legitimate and illegitimate knowledge and use their explicit power as guardians of the permissible to detect and eliminate dangerous knowledge. Second, constraint is imposed on teacher autonomy by pressure groups within the community. In recent years there have been calls from education authorities to involve the community directly in the process of schooling. Not all who advocate such changes have in mind the idea that the community should have some control over school knowledge, but some groups do, in fact, interpret community involvement in this way. The Festival of Light is one such group which advises its members to monitor the knowledge transmitted to children in schools and to complain directly to the Department of Education about content thought to be morally objectionable. Thus, we have a situation where teachers are encouraged to be imaginative and innovative in arranging their curriculum within a structure which, through moral guardians of one sort or another, places considerable constraint on any real autonomy.

In the rest of this section I will elaborate this contradiction in more formal terms by using the notion of 'boundary strength' to compare the modes of knowledge transmission and social control.

In the previous section, I described the informal, personal way in which the teacher related to his students, thereby weakening the conventional boundaries of teacher and student roles. Other aspects of the pedagogy also weakened or blurred conventional boundaries. In his English teaching, the teacher tried to integrate contents that were normally kept apart. In speaking of the new English syllabus, he commented:

> It's more integrated. It gives the teacher more freedom. There's no: this lesson is comprehension, the next day will be dictation. And I want your comprehension book on this day, your composition book on that day, and your workbook or whatever on that day. That's what it used to be: Monday you have the novel, Tuesday drama, Wednesday language and so on, and you had five little books for English. Now you only have one book, your theme book, and you teach it by themes and the theme you pick is up to you.

Furthermore, in his choice of themes, he deliberately tried to break down the previously insulated spheres of educational knowledge and everyday community knowledge. Using Bernstein's terms, we can conclude that the teacher was operating within an 'invisible pedagogy' of weak classification and weak frames, and that he possessed wide discretion over the style and content of his teaching (Bernstein, 1971). When we turn from the knowledge dimension to the process of social control, we see that such autonomy and discretion was contradicted by specific constraints.

Constraints are imposed on knowledge by authorities within the school system or by individuals or groups in the community. The internal constraints vary with the degree of hierarchy of command and the external constraints vary with the degree of insulation from parental and community power. Weak insulation would exist when parents or other community members exercised a degree of formal power over such matters as curriculum, staff selection and school policy. Strong boundary strength or insulation would exist when the community was totally excluded from the decision-making process. With hierarchy of command, we turn from external to internal boundaries. In a school system with a strong hierarchy of command, we would expect a finely stratified authority system, with individuals at each level exercising different degrees of power and gaining different material and symbolic rewards. Strong boundaries between individuals in the hierarchy would be maintained by institutional and symbolic means such as salary differentials, clear-cut spaces for different categories of staff and for staff and pupils, different forms of address and relationships between different categories of people, etc. In contrast, a system of weak hierarchy would de-emphasise the formal distinctions between individuals and groups. An attempt to weaken internal boundaries would produce features such as the following: an emphasis on collective or participatory decision-making; social relations between staff and between staff and pupils taking account of personal rather than positional or status differences; the symbolic use of space and clothes stressing similarities between individuals rather than different statuses.

It may be possible to use hierarchy of internal command and insulation from outside community control as variables that define the type of social control over knowledge in schools. Discontented parents can direct their complaints about dangerous knowledge to different levels in the bureaucracy. In general, parental power is more effective the higher it is mediated through the hierarchy of command. When discontent is levelled at the teacher or the Principal it is normally contained; parents are reassured and teachers are sometimes reprimanded verbally, or in more serious cases pressured by the Principal to apply for a transfer to another school. In the case study, the parent simultaneously directed the complaint to both the Principal and the Director-General of Education, and mechanisms of control were activated that involved the total hierarchy. Between the initial parent complaint and the final expulsion of a teacher from the profession are many compromise 'solutions', and it is of interest in the case study to examine the degree to which these 'ways out' were used or passed over.

We will now turn to the sequence of events to establish how hierarchy of command and community power together controlled dangerous knowledge. The first step in the control process began when the teacher was told by the Acting Principal that he had received a letter from a parent complaining that her daughter had been upset by a lesson. As the teacher made clear in the interview, the parent had not attempted to contact him.

> It was a parent a second form history class and I had a little girl in it whose parent complained. The letter was sent in straight to the Department and a copy to the school. She never sought a conversation with me, never asked me any questions, just sent it straight in and they have to act on it. They usually ring up the Principal and ask him what's going on. They just send out an Inspector and he does a report and sees what goes on.
>
> (You didn't meet the parent?)
>
> No.
>
> (There was no effort by the Acting Principal to bring you together?)
>
> I was going to ring up the parents and talk to them and arrange a meeting, but he just said, 'No. You are not doing that. No way!' 'He said, 'I don't want you to see that parent at all'.' And when the Inspector came, I said I would like to talk to the parent and he forbade me to.
>
> (Why? Any reason?)
>
> No. No reason. Well, the normal way is that the parent comes to the school and talks to the teacher. You're the one in the classroom and you're the one who has direct contact with the kid. You know the circumstances of whatever happened. Not the kid who goes home and gives it to the parent in any version at all. I had no idea what the kid had told her parent, no idea at all.
>
> (Why did the Acting Principal let it go so far as it did? Would the Principal have let it go so far?)
>
> No, the Principal wouldn't have. The worst thing the Head would have done is, if he thought you were guilty, he wouldn't have said anything to the Department. He would have said, 'Here you are,' and given you a transfer form. 'I want you to fill it out'. And you will then transfer from his school. That's the only thing he would have done. That's pretty standard.

From the beginning, it seems that the authorities within the school had ruled out a number of solutions to the problem. There was no attempt at discussion and conciliation between teacher and parent and no effort was made to transfer the teacher to another school. The letter of complaint was sent to both the Acting Principal (the Principal was on leave at the time of the dispute) and the Department, but it seems that the Department also decided against resolving the dispute through informal means. The first indication that the teacher received of Departmental concern was the visit of an investigating Inspector. The Inspector met with the Acting Principal and Subject Master and they apparently agreed that not only was the specific charge accurate, but it was indicative of a more pervasive and dangerous heresy. The Inspector subsequently spent a week in the school, collecting children's exercise books and interviewing select pupils in order to detect and document dangerous knowledge.

As the teacher recorded, the Inspector was not at all interested in talking to him.

> He never once came into my lessons, all the time he was there. He didn't check my teaching. He didn't talk to me. He didn't ask me about my ideas on education. All my books were collected from any kids I'd taught. He looked at them all, and interviewed select kids, five kids from 250 that I had taught.
>
> (Which pupils?)
>
> They were picked by the Subject Master because they were 'responsible'. He interviewed them. He didn't talk to any of the other staff. Only the Acting Principal and the Subject Master. And then on the last day he had a little list of charges and he came in and I sat in the Principal's office and he handed me the list and said, 'What do you have to say about each of the following?'
>
> (When did you hear about the suspension?)
>
> He came for the inspection, conducted the inspection, then about a month after that he paid another visit to the school. Called me over just before lunch time and handed me this letter and said, 'You've been suspended'. I said, 'What?' He said, 'You've been suspended'. I said, 'You must be kidding'. And he said, 'I wish I was. I'm sorry your career has to end like this'. I said, 'Well, I think I had better get in touch with the Federation'. And he said, 'Yes, that might help'. When he first came, when he wanted to interview me, I said, 'I'd better get my Federation Representative here before you ask me any questions'. He said, 'No. Well I don't think that's really necessary. It's a very informal little thing'.

It is useful to see these events as a labelling process. Prior to the letter of complaint, the teacher did not see himself as a rule-breaker in either his teaching or personal conduct. This is not to say that there was not a difference in style between the teacher and many other teachers on the staff, but the important point is that such differences as clothing, physical appearance, language, relationships with pupils and familiarity with pupil culture were seized on as supporting evidence of heresy. The initial complaint about a particular lesson was generalised into a broad charge of misconduct and disgraceful and improper conduct supported by a large number of instances. As is typical in the process of deviancy amplification, the accusers set to work to construct retrospective interpretations and a systematic search was made of past events in order to substantiate their definition of deviancy. These definitions were held at this stage by a very small group of people — a parent, the Acting Principal, the Subject Master and the investigating Departmental Inspector. It became clear to the teacher in his relationships with the authorities within the school that their conviction of deviancy was so firmly held that they had moved beyond the point where they viewed particular actions as 'bad' or 'unprofessional' to a view of him as emotionally unbalanced and in need of therapy. The labelling process had proceeded to this point when the teacher was officially suspended from his teaching duties.

From this point on, the control process assumed a slow bureaucratic momentum. The departmental lawyers began to build up their case to substantiate the charges. The Teacher's Federation appealed on several occasions to the Director-General to revoke the suspension in favour of other 'solutions', without success. Support for the teacher was mobilised by staff within the high school, by the local teachers association and by the English and History teachers' associations. Negotiation and compromise failed, and seven weeks later the departmental hearing began, to continue intermittently over the next ten weeks. The closed hearing contained the appearance but by no means the substance of a legal enquiry. The Department's power was complete: it laid the charge, conducted the enquiry, reached a judgement and had power to penalise. Under Section 37 of the Teaching Services Act, the officer conducting the enquiry is entitled to 'conduct any such enquiry without regard to legal forms and shall direct himself by the best evidence he can procure and that is laid before him whether it be such evidence as the law would require or admit in other cases or not'. Although a transcript was kept of the hearing, it was not available to the teacher or his legal representatives either during or after the enquiry. One by one, the charges were laid aside as they were shown to be without any basis, and only three were pursued to the end of the hearing.[4] Although the departmental officer found two of the charges proved, he decided not to act upon them. The teacher was accused of 'serious errors of judgement' and warned of the 'potentially disturbing psycho-social implications' of the material used in his teaching. In deciding not to punish the teacher with a fine, demotion or dismissal, the department protected itself from public scrutiny. If a penalty had been imposed, the teacher would have been able to appeal to the Crown Employees Appeal Board which is an open court of law, requiring evidence on oath and an accessible transcript of proceedings. As he was found to be guilty, but was not punished, the teacher was denied the right of appeal.

This is sufficient detail to illustrate how a parental complaint about a classroom incident triggered off mechanisms of control that escalated into an elaborate, quasi-legal hearing by the Education Department.[5] In analysing the process of control, I have distinguished between internal constraints (hierarchy of command) and external constraints (insulation from parental and community power). As regards the former, we have seen how the teacher worked within a strong hierarchy of command which constrained him through the explicit and formal powers of the subject master, Deputy Principal, Principal, Inspectors and other departmental officers. In the case of external constraints, an important distinction is necessary between direct and indirect power. In a direct sense, the teacher was strongly insulated from parental and community power for, in New South Wales, parents and community have no formal means of control in government secondary schools. In the preceding paragraphs, we have seen how an initial complaint from a parent was mediated and elaborated by the school and departmental hierarchy of command. But although powerless to constrain teachers directly, parents and community groups nevertheless exerted an indirect influence over the events. Through letter writing, press releases, and informal pressure, parents and other groups adopted a 'watch-dog' role and created a mood of moral panic which indirectly supported the hierarchy of command by insisting that censure of the teacher was urgent and legitimate.[6]

In this section we have analysed separately knowledge and control so as to clarify the contradiction between the hierarchical structure of authority and the principle of teacher autonomy in matters of knowledge transmission. The teacher found himself in a situation which conveyed this message: go ahead and develop curricular and teaching relationships that connect with the real interests and concerns of your students, but don't forget that parental and community groups increasingly wish to influence the knowledge taught in schools, and that there is a strong hierarchical structure of power and authority ready to censure you if you go beyond the implicit limits.

Conclusion: Anomalies, Boundaries and Ideological Control

So far I have used the case study to raise some questions about the nature of dangerous knowledge in schools and the structural basis of its emergence and control. It is necessary to widen the analysis and locate the case study within the wider system of ideological domination. In general terms, we are beginning to understand the ideological effects of schooling and the way educational knowledge serves the interests of dominant groups (Althusser, 1971; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Friere, 1971; Gramsci, 1971), but, as the case study illustrates, the mechanism of ideological control is exceedingly complex. Was the teacher challenging the hegemony of the dominant class? In what sense was the knowledge a dangerous counter-ideology? In order to avoid the mistake of assuming a clear-cut distinction between moral and political censorship, it is necessary to consider the nature of ideology.[7] If we adopt a particular view of ideology, it will be possible to see what I have referred to as anomalies in the category system and the weakening of boundaries as threats to the dominant ideology. Contemporary Marxist writers have stressed that the realm of ideology refers not only to systems of beliefs and theories, such as liberalism, but more importantly to common-sense, taken-for-granted ways of classifying the world. Ideology seeps into the language we use, shapes the category systems we think through and legitimates acceptable social behaviour. If the sense that we make of the world is ideological, then the distinction between moral and political censorship becomes unnecessary as both can be seen as forms of ideological control.

Schools maintain the hegemony of the dominant class and its ideology through selecting out the dominant meanings and excluding counter-ideologies. In this way, a particular view of the world, favourable to sections within the dominant class, is presented as the natural, the normal, the taken-for-granted. In focusing on anomalous knowledge, and in blurring the conventional boundaries in his pedagogy, the teacher in our study dislocated the unwritten, ideological consensus. The mechanism of control that we have looked at was, in this sense, an ideological action to reassert the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable classifications, permitted and deviant behaviours and legitimate and dangerous knowledge.

FOOTNOTES

1 Section 3 of the Act specifies five breaches of discipline: a breach of any provision of the regulations; misconduct; the use of intoxicating beverages or drugs to excess; wilful disobedience or disregard of any lawful order or direction made or given under the Act or regulations; negligent, careless, inefficient or incompetent discharge of duties; disgraceful or improper conduct. Punishments for these breaches are also set out in Section 37. An offending teacher may be cautioned, reprimanded, fined, reduced in rate of salary or wages, reduced to a lower classification or position in the Teacher Service or be directed to resign.

2. In reading the allegations, it is important to remember that we are not dealing with a description of the teacher's actual behaviour. By the end of the case, all but two particulars had been dismissed. For the authorities, however, they were serious charges which, if upheld, constituted grounds for censure. I am interested in how the authorities define dangerous knowledge, and the fact that the charges were found to be without substance in the particular case does not limit their value for my analysis.

3 In this study I am using knowledge to refer to the content of all the messages that the teacher communicates to the student. It includes both curricula knowledge about the subjects that students formally study in school, and behavioural knowledge which covers the messages conveyed to students through such aspects as the teacher's dress, manner, language and teaching style.

4 The three charges were:
   i Reading 14 year old students a story called, 'Sing This at Your Old School Reunion' and asking them to write an essay about it.
   ii Allowing students to retain improper material in their note books.
   iii Disobeying an instruction to refer every topic or piece of literature to be discussed to the Subject Master for approval.

5 My main interest in this study is the nature of dangerous knowledge and the mechanisms of control. As I have hinted, the teaching profession reacted very strongly to what they saw as departmental victimisation, and this was a very important aspect of the case to which I have not been able to give sufficient weight in this paper.

6 The note of moral panic can be detected fairly directly in the following newspaper captions: 'Love Lessons: Teacher Accused'; 'Sex Case Victory Claim by Teachers'; 'Sex in the Schoolroom: Parents Accuse Young Teacher'.

7 This is unfortunately a rather cursory look at the important theme of ideological control. Hall (1977) provides an excellent introduction to the key issues.

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Pusey, M. 'The legitimation of state education systems'. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, vol. 16, no. 2, 1980, pp. 46–52.
The author examines the way in which psychological, political and administrative changes have undermined the authority of Australian schools, basing his analysis on Habermas's concept of 'legitimacy crises'. These changes are then related both to curricular development under the circumstances of the recent past where teachers have been freed from control and to apparent attempts by central government to intervene in the curricular decisions of teachers through the Curriculum Development Centre, a Commonwealth agency.

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the mid-1960s in Victoria, but it also includes a case study of the accreditation of an HSC course in drama, showing very clearly the way coalitions of teachers and others were formed by negotiation so that decisions were made that allowed the curriculum to assume an acceptable form.

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The birth and development of 'Enterprise Australia' is examined here. This is an organisation in support of capitalism financed by a number of large Australian companies, supported by some trade unionists and modelled on a similar US body. Its attempts to influence secondary curricula in South Australia and Victoria are related to the reactions of teachers' unions in these states. Opposition was more completely organised in South Australia than in Victoria so that adoption was more common in schools in the latter than in the former state.

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About the author

P.W. Musgrave graduated from Cambridge University with an honours degree in economics. After five years in the woollen textile industry he became a secondary teacher in 1956, moving into teacher education in 1962. He gained his PhD from London University in 1964 and became a lecturer in sociology at the University of Aberdeen in 1956. He was appointed to a Chair of Education in 1970 at Monash University and was Dean from 1977 to 1982. His main research interests are now in the sociology of the curriculum and of children's literature.

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